Edmond Uhry, Galleries of Memory
vol. II

Memoirs

Edmond Uhry (4/23/1874 Ingweiler-Alsace — 2/25/1954 New York)

GALLERIES OF MEMORY

Photocopy of typescript. English. 1946. 2 vols., 407 pp.

Edmond Uhry, one of five children in a strict Orthodox family, was born April 23, 1874, in Ingweiler (Alsace),the son of a merchant in spices and notions (epicerie-mercerie). After a brief family history, he describes the store and its merchandize, and the work connected with it. The next few chapters are devoted to a description of life in Ingweiler in the 1870's and 1880's --business, social, cultural, and religious--culminating in a detailed description of all Jewish holidays and festivities. Uhry attended the town school in Ingweiler until his 12th year, then went to the Gymnasium in Bouxweiler. A few months after graduation, in January 1891, he emigrated to the United States, where two of his elder brothers had preceded him. The reason for this decision was a combination of very limited economic possibilities, the threat of three years of military service, and fear of another war.

Uhry's first job in New York was as an errand boy in a firm that imported and manufactured ladies' neckwear, aprons, babies' caps and bibs. In January 1896 he changed jobs, joining a smaller firm in which one of his brothers was a junior partner, and he soon began to travel for the firm. He became a U.S. citizen in 1899; that summer he made the first of many trips to Europe to visit his family.

Soon after his arrival in New York, he met a little "girl next door," Lillian Hessberg, whom he married 11 years later (in 1902). They had two children, a daughter and a son. That same year he became a partner in a millinary firm. After the death of his father-in-law he also managed the family-owned real estate business. Always interested in charitable work and social service, Uhry became an ardent and very active member of the Executive Council of the Free Synagogue of Dr. Stephen S. Wise.

Memoirs donated by Uhry's daughter, Mrs. Louis I. Newman , 1970

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Galleries

Of

Memory.

Edmond Uhry.

Book II

GALLERIES OF MEMORY

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CHAPTER XV: CROSSING THE "BIG POND"

La Bourgogne was the sturdy ship
That brought him over here;
Ill-fated boat, on later trip,
She failed to make her pier.

It was a cold Saturday morning, the skies were grey, and I imagined they were frowning on me. There I was, one who in compliance with Orthodox Jewish Law had never even walked beyond the prescribed distance on the Sabbath, after an all-night ride, about to heap more sin on my guilty head by eating the treive food. (The dietary kitchen on the Atlantic steamers was a later installation.) But, one must eat.

After placing my hand baggage in the cabin, I sought the dining salon. A friendly steward who introduced himself as a native of a town near my old home, readily removed any shyness that might have prevented me from taking full advantage of the hospitality of the French Line. He placed a menu before me, explaining that I could order one or all the hundred and one items on it. He proposed starting with an orange, a whole orange all for myself. In Ingwiller we saw oranges only at Christmas when we received packages of three or four as gifts from wholesalers we patronized. There, one orange was usually served to four or five, and there was also a fair division of the peels among the children. We had a way of making imitation false teeth out of them.

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that I go to meals, and I became the periodic conveyor of soup and fish to other fish. We had head-winds and high seas until Friday. I revived after that and enjoyed the remainder of the trip.

On Sunday morning, January 18, 1891, we were welcomed to these shores by the Statue of Liberty, in a setting of bright winter sunshine.

Go there, where Liberty's strong hands
The torch of Freedom hold,
Where the oppressed from many lands
Find refuge in her fold.

CHAPTER XVI: ARRIVAL IN NEW YORK CITY MY FIRST WEEK IN AMERICA

My brothers and Mr. Sam Geismar received me at the French Line pier, at the foot of Morton Street. I had not seen my brothers in eight and six years respectively. I was dressed in my best, wearing a light grey collegiate hat that attracted more attention than my brothers appreciated. The investment in it exceeded the total cost of all the headwear I ever possessed. I was horrified when my brothers took this piece of male millinery and with one stroke of the hand, transformed it into a type of Alpine.

The matter of Customs Inspection would have been a simple one had it not been for the above-mentioned air-tight soldered tin box of green mustard. A fortune in valuables could have been smuggled in this container. To increase the Inspector's justified suspicions, every now and then, from sleeves and trousers, a bottle of Kirschbrandy or other extra-enforced sealed packages would be brought to daylight. Only quick thinking and the proposition of my brother that it all should be thrown overboard, satisfied the authorities about the actual triviality of these articles. These were chiefly the unique gifts through which my townsfolk tried to bring delight to their American relatives.

It was a crisp January morning and a thin cover of

snow lay on the streets of New York. I had my first ride on a horse-car, then running across Eighth Street. The tracks were slippery and it was evidently hard for the driver to bring the car to a full stop. My brothers hopped off; I followed, facing the wrong way, and the sidewalks of New York kissed me in welcome, but in the wrong place.

We hear of many refugees
In gratitude profound,
When landing, fall upon their knees
To kiss this holy ground.

Confused by big-town rush and jam,
Our Yokel from the sticks,
Alighting backwards from a tram,
Performed some cunning tricks.

In appreciation not remiss
To new-found habitat,
He did not stoop the ground to kiss,
It kissed him where he sat.

At First Avenue and Eighth Street we mounted the stairs to the Second Avenue Elevated railroad. I had heard about the railway running above New York houses, and here was something to write home about.

I was welcomed at 424 East 57th Street by Mrs. Sam Geismar, whose home became mine for the following nine years. A fine goose dinner (gestopfte Gans from Waukashau, Wisconsin) was served, and after my experiences of the preceding days, I could have done full justice to such a repast. However, answering questions from all sides made this impossible. When the picture of my full plate was misinterpreted as a sign of lack of appetite, I had the lucky inspiration of

relating the story of the traveling Schnorrer who was the carrier of the news from place to place. He was invited to a meal with a large family and inquiries about friends and relatives living in his territory came in rapid succession. "Have you been in Buckelsdorf lately?" "Yes." "How is soandso?" "Dead." These two monosyllables were his only answers to the inquiries. When his suspicious host made remarks about the uniformity of his answers, he replied, "When I eat, everybody is dead!" The point of my story was readily understood and from there on I relished the delicacies set before me, while my hostess beamed with the joy of satisfaction that comes with an appreciative guest. Goose is forbidden food for me now but, like the old maid, I still like to talk about it.

In the afternoon, I was taken to the Erstein families. Leopold and Max Erstein, natives of Ingwiller, were among the first from our town to settle in New York. Others, the Meisses and Kahns, had preceded them to America, but lived in Cincinnati; also some Uhrys, Ourys and Levys that settled in Louisiana in the 1840's or '50's. The Ersteins frequently spent their summers at Ingwiller and were a sort of anchorage for those who followed them here.

I made special mention of the hat I wore when I landed. As an extra precaution against a possible snowball attack on it by the street loafers who were lured to such waywardness by old chapellerie such as grey stovepipes, my

brothers resurrected a brown derby to Americanize my appearance. An incident of the next day will explain my mention of so trivial a matter. I caused a sensation in the home of Mr. Max Erstein. Mrs. Stein, his wife's mother, spoke mostly German. She asked me a question which I answered in correct and fluent teutonic style. She spontaneously threw up her hands shouting, "Max, a miracle! At last an Alsatian who can speak German!"

Every hour of that first week revealed new wonders to the Yokel transplanted from the sticks to what was then the world's third metropolis. My brothers mapped my daily programs, and I will record them inning by inning as best as I can remember.

For Monday: Haircut, exploration of the Sutton place and 57th Street district, European correspondence.

I rose early and felt that I should lay Teffilin (philacteries) after a lengthy omission during my trip. The Geismars lived in a railroad flat, connected by fire-escape with one on the same level in the house next door. Their neighbors and friends living there had a little daughter of eight, who had heard of the arrival of a greenhorn next door. The little girl pleaded with her folks for permission to get a glimpse of this freak, but was told that on the first day a call would be an intrusion. Early that Monday morning, before going to school, Mrs. Geismar led her over the fire-escape to get a peep. I sat in the dining-room, saying

prayers, bedecked on head, arm and hand with the philacteries. She shyly looked me over and noted especially the black cube containing holy writ, that stood out in the center of my forehead. She ran home telling her mother that it was not a green horn but it had a black horn between the eyes and straps were hanging down from the back of the head.

A little girl of barely eight,
For weeks had heard it said
The family next door await
A greenhorn boy, named Ed.

In circus, picture books or zoo,
She never yet had seen
Nor read instories false or true,
That boys grew horns of green.

Upon this monstrous freak to gape
Without a day's delay,
This lassie crossed the fire-escape,
This wonder to assay.

The siren-blast of factories
Woke me at break of day.
I put on my philacteries
And bowed my head to pray.

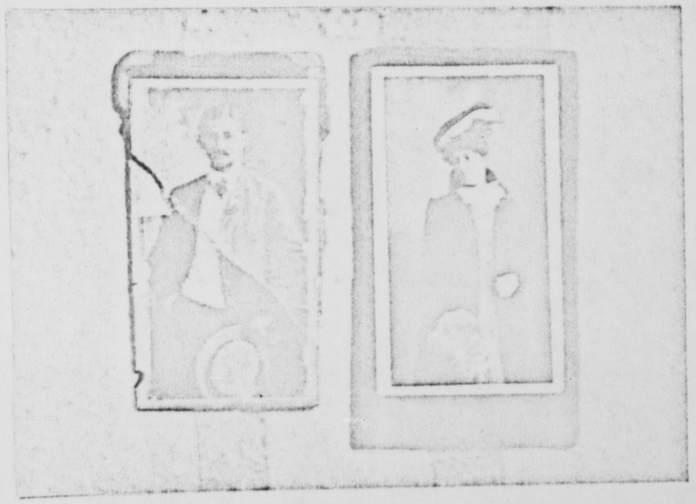
One look, and she was all aghast,
Picked up her hat and wraps,
Ran home to tell in double fast,
"This boy is hung with straps.

And where the hair and forehead meet
I'm sure and could have sworn
It's gospel truth and not deceit,
I saw a jet black horn."

In explanation she was told
The little horns she saw
Within them, scrolls of parchment hold
With writ from holy law.

The Hessbergs were the family next door. Their little girl, Lillian, eleven years after, was further involved





Lillian Hessberg, age 9

Edmond Uhry, age 27 betrothed

Lillian Hessberg, age 19

becoming my wife and help-mate.

An American haircut by the German barber on the block was the next item on the agenda. He had a one-chair shop. A young fashion-plate presented himself for beautifying, as I was ready to leave the shop. Picture his mortification when, on completion of his treatment, he discovered the exchange of his stylish black Dunlap for an outmoded brown derby.

The barber only knew that the "robber" was a recent arrival from abroad. The great difference in style, color and quality between the two bowlers eliminated all probability of a mistake. Heartbroken, the victim called at the home of his aunt to be comforted in his great loss. The aunt had the solution at once, crossed the fire-escape and rescued the precious "Deckel" from the villain's befuddled head. After all, it takes more than one short day to become acquainted with a new hat and I offered general bewilderment as the excuse that was readily accepted. Thus, step by step, I became enmeshed in the life of the Hessberg family, going from the Teffilin and derby on the head, down to the heart, culminating in the permanent and happy merger by marriage.

My brothers, realizing the necessity for my association with boys of my own age, took me that Monday evening to meet Ludwig Gunzendorfer, the younger brother of their friend Adolph. Ludwig had come here from the Adelsdorf in Bavaria

the year before and was quite Americanized. He initiated me the next evening into the Jewish-Bavarian colony that was scattered between 50th and 58th Streets from Second Avenue to the East River. I will return to this in a later chapter.

On Tuesday, my brother Moise took me downtown to see the Mr. Simson of whom I wrote before, and I was hired for my first job to start Monday, January 26, at 7:45 A.M. My brother took me along to get my first lesson in commercial psychology.

He had a call for a piece of red satin from a congenial gentleman dealing in masquerade and theatrical costumes. The importers my brother represented carried only one quality in this color. The customer, hardly lookingat the goods, asked in his best Pfaelzer accent, "Wie viel?" Reply, "Seventy-five cents." "No good, bring something better. And hurry, hurry!"

My brother and I went to lunch at Lyons' on the Bowery, world-famous restaurant that never closed its doors, the proprietor having buried the lock and key at the opening. It took more than the customary hour to consume the full course table d'hote dinner at 25 cents. The customer awaited our return with great impatience. "Hurry, hurry" was his greeting. My brother further tried his patience, lighting several gas lights to brighten up the re-christened satin.

Customer: "How much?" Reply: "One dollar." Customer: "Smarty! Why didn't you bring that first off?"

Over a bottle of wine served by the customer in appreciation of the prompt service, he tried to impress me with the importance of adopting the "honesty is the best policy" practice, telling me that his former supplier of satins used to add the year of the Lord on his bills. "And," he went on, "you can't fool me, much."

With it all, this man annually added to his holdings of real estate and became very wealthy.

This introduction to American business left me in a state of confusion. In the years following, I would drop in on my Palatinatian friend for a sociable visit and he would frequently give me samples of materials he needed, having neither time nor will to look for them himself. I had quite a harvest when he had the contract to supply the costumes for the English opera that was produced then at the American Theater at Eighth Avenue and 42nd Street. For one earning eight dollars a week, it did not take much of a financial downpour to make a bumper crop.

Through the years I often wondered whether the development and application of efficiency and system was beneficial or not to small business.

In the evening, my new friend and sponsor, Ludwig, took me to see the boys, Richard Frank and Simon Rosenberger.

They lived with an uncle and an aunt, the Rosenbuschs at 310 East 58th Street. Richard had come here from Saalfeld about a year and a half before me; Simon from Bad-Kissingen at about the same time. Both of them spoke English fluently in spite of the fact that German had remained the household language of the Rosenbuschs.

Clinging to old-world customs and languages seemed to be the rule of that period, a matter that vexed me more or less. One of the first questions asked a newcomer would be, "Woher?" My hostess inquired about my origin and on finding it to be in the "approved zone" went on remarking, "Dann hawe Sie die Bolacke gewiss aach gern?" Note the soft "B" in the mispronounced noun. This increased the degree of malice that accompanied the uttering of the word. I was shocked and mystified by this bigoted attitude of one class of Jews to another. I admit I had seen a bit of this prejudice in my home town. There we only knew the "Ostjude" that came as the wandering professional Schnorrer, as a rule unkempt and unscrupulous.

Provincial false pride placed all from beyond their immediate border-line in an inferior class. But here were people possessing at least as much or more culture and character than did the average South-German Dorfjude, self-appointed aristocrat. They did not like their language, their gesticulations, their foods, names, beards, or Scheidels, not realizing how little difference there was between their

own German-Yiddish-Ghetto jargon and the one brought from Poland or Galicia. They held their noses at the mere sound of the word "gefillte-fish," a delicacy that has outlived their own suss-saure or scharfe-fish. They forgot the fact that Morton and Stanley were the disguised versions of Moische or Schlome, names of their own bearded ancestors, and the Roslyns and Muriels, the re-hashed names for Rifkes and Malkes, whose photographs as brides in Scheidel-coiffure were safely kept out of sight. Notwithstanding all that has happened to the Jews of the world throughout the years and to this day, this contemptible malice persists.

On Wednesday, my brother Emile took me downtown to introduce me to his employers and co-workers, at S.C.Cahn and Co., 93 Prince Street, manufacturers of babies caps. One of the things that struck me was that most of the people I met spoke mixed English, and disregarded all grammar.

The most lasting impression on that day was the noontime meal at Felix's French-kosher Restaurant, at 50 cents, no tipping allowed. There we sat at a table with eight or ten others. Conversation was mostly in German. New European arrivals here were comparatively few. Communications with Europe was limited and I was questioned from all sides on many subjects.

Among those I met there were the founders of some now nationally-known businesses. This was quite an opportunity for a small-town boy of sixteen, and was the formation

of the nucleus of a diverse circle of acquaintances, men with varying viewpoints that I only understood or could explain in later years.

I was glad to return to my new home that evening, full of good food, new impressions, and much bewildered.

Thursday was spent with European correspondence. Some of the replies to those letters are still among my keepsakes. They readily reflect the vivid new impressions that were conveyed in my letters. An interesting echo to a bit of bragging in a letter to one of my teachers about a raise in my weekly salary from three dollars to four, came in his comment, - that while all that I reported about my progress was as he expected, little did he dream that my financial success in such a short time were possible.

The autograph album and Stammbuch, collections of inscriptions of good wishes, were all the rage. The little girl from next door again crossed the fire-escape, shyly requesting my contribution. I "broke out" in English verse, my first attempt in the art that I have so often abused since and wrote:

"May your life happy be,"
Is my dear wish for thee!

The original manuscript is still preserved. Little did I dream then that I was destined in years to come to play a major role in the realization of this wish.

Friday: I ran errands and explored the neighborhood;

the Felsenkeller at 57th Street and the East River; Jones' Woods at 65th Street, Bloomingdale's, Max Schwarz' Primadora cigar store, 50th Street, then known as "Kugelrow," a name begotten from a substantiated rumor that most of its in habitants were fond of the Jewish pudding called "Schabbos-Kugel." "Kugelrow" was an early forerunner of the "Borsht-circuit."

In the evening my pals took me to Temple Bethel at 76th Street and Fifth Avenue. This was my initiation into Reform Juadaism. I felt awkward removing my hat inside of a synagogue but soon recovered from the first shock as I became absorbed in the proceedings in this brilliantly lighted, comfortably heated Auditorium. I was lifted to celestial realms by the singing of the fine choir, and the rendition of well-chosen organ music.

Rabbi Rudolph Grossman, then the young associate of Doctor Kaufman Koehler, spoke on the "Merchant of Venice." How easy and cosy all this was compared with the candle-lit, stone floored and unheated Shul in Ingwiller! This should have been something to write home about, but on second thought, I deemed it advisable to refrain from so doing for reasons evident to any Orthodox co-religionist.

On Saturday morning, I said prayers at home. In the afternoon I became further enmeshed with the Hessberg family as the guest of thirteen-year-old Milton and his eight-year-old sister, Lillian. They were instructed by their

mother to show me Central Park and its menagerie, and received money to treat themselves and their guest, as well as the monkeys, with peanuts and lozenges.

Sixtieth Street and Fifth Avenue was the mart for such purchases, and old New Yorkers, I am sure, still recall the sound of sizzling steam escaping from the peanut roasters there.

In the woods at Ingwiller, I had seen rabbits, and on rare occasions, a deer. My acquaintance with wild animal life was limited to organ grinders' monkey on a chain or a dancing bear stepping to the tempo beaten on a tambourine. What I saw that afternoon exceeded all bounds of childish imagination gained from picture-books and bedtime stories. I am sure my indifference to the study of zoology would have disappeared had I ever been shown a lion or an elephant in the flesh.

Saturday night was not alone the time for the weekly bath, a luxury in which only a minority indulged, but it was also the time for limited amusement, a show now and then or attendance at a ball preceded by an amateur performance.

On this Saturday night the family took me to see "Babes in Woodland," at Niblo's Gardens. Niblo's Gardens was one of New York's largest theaters, located at Broadway near Prince Street. I was dizzy with delight and with wonder at what would be next in the succession of this first week's

revelations.

Sunday, after a work-week averaging at least sixty hours, was indeed a day of rest. By virtue of the long hours of labor, it was for most people the only day for amusement and social intercourse. No radios, no movies, no taxis, no telephones, slow transportation, and even he who did not live in that era can readily visualize the necessary simplicity of the forms of recreation. People, however, were none the worse off and got the same thrill from the simple, inexpensive things as we do from those offered today, for which we stand on line and spend much money.

My joyful anticipation of thatSunday was an invitation to the Bar-Mitzvah dinner of Moe Erstein. Among the 35 or 40 guests, there were quite a few Alsatians, who asked many questions about the homeland and were greatly amused with parodies of some German songs in our special Alsatian-Yiddish jargon that I was called on to render.

The dissipation of that evening did not lessen the zeal with which I started in my first job the next morning.

I found a job at three per week;
Swept office, stairs and aisles.
With calculus and French and Greek
I dusted shelves and files,

Ran errands, fetched the lunch and beer
-- A lowly task is such --
Controlled my temper, kept good cheer
When I was called, "Hey Dutch!"

CHAPTER XVII: MY FIRST JOB

On Monday morning, before sunrise, I reported for work at Simson, Greenebaum and Rosenthal, importers and manufacturers of ruchings, ladies' neckwear, aprons, babies' caps and bibs, located at 42 Greene Street.

I was assigned to sweep certain aisles, to dust shelves and boxes; to run (not walk) errands, and to do other sundry chores within the scope of my position.

My first errand was to an Express Company on Canal Street where I made the purpose of my mission known in my best Oxford English. The Express Company employee, in answer, growled something that sounded Greek to me and I replied: "I can not comprehend you, sir." In a few seconds I was surrounded by the staff of employees who spoke a language that made me wonder if this is America, though the signs on the doors and windows read "U.S. Express Company."

I had brought my lunch from home. My brother told me to inquire about the time and place allotted me for this function, and to go to Canal Street to top off the repast with a cup of hot coffee. I conscientiously complied, walked to Canal Street and entered the first restaurant that I came to. It was Whyte's, catering to the best clientele - the commission and silk merchants of the neighborhood. I stood

up at the cashier's desk and asked for a cup of black coffee. It had to be black, for compliance with dietary laws, my lunch having been meat. I had heard visiting Americans tell the folks at home that New York life was hectic and that most people ate hurriedly, standing up. It took a lot of persuasion from the head-waiter to convince me that I must sit down. From a large menu placed before me, I ordered the black coffee. Word went around the restaurant about this, and in a few moments a procession of service wound its way to my table. The head-waiter unfurled a pure white napkin, placing it gently in my lap. Next came a bus-boy with a carafe of water, a glass, spoons and sugar. Third in line was the waiter, holding up high a tray with the cup of coffee, and behind him a second bus-boy with a finger-bowl. The place was in an uproar, and I was suspicious that all this was not in line with American custom. When I spoke of it at home that evening, my brother admitted that he forgot to tell me that Naething's Coffee and Sinkers Emporium was the place he had in mind. I swore I would never enter a restaurant again.

The tantalizing flavor of my landlady's cooking penetrated the shipping room air and reached the nostrils of some of our hungry salesmen. They would, in a casual way, come along and pick up a little snack from my lunch and sometimes put down a dime, which I would not accept. Soon there

was quite some rivalry among them in the business of sharing my lunch, and one extravagant "Fresser" sometimes bought the bag for a quarter. I would then go to Naething's and have five sugar-coated cup cakes with coffee for ten cents, with a net profit of fifteen cents, tax exempt.

I was the fourth of the errand boys and the only foreigner among them. During the afternoon of my first day, one of them, to impress me with his authority, pointed to a ladder and a box of rags and polishes and addressed me saying, "Hey, Dutch, you take downstairs." I donned my velveted collar and cuff overcoat and the derby hat and followed him to the entrance of the building. There were man-sized brass signs to be cleaned by me. All dressed up for the occasion. While there was very little traffic on this bitter cold January day, a few passersby stopped to inquire about the nature of the bet that I had lost. I did not understand their questions but I instinctively sensed the situation. Before the day was over I had an opportunity to ascertain who were my superiors and who my equals. The signs were kept in order by an outside service, and the stupid would-be dictator received a warming from the chief.

Not many weeks after it was my good fortune to discover a scheme of petty thievery subtly conceived by him in a manner that might have made me an innocent accomplice. We had daily deliveries to the department stores, then located

from Broadway and Eighth Street through 14th Street, up Sixth Avenue to 23rd Street. There was no big business above that.

My contemporaries will recall John Daniell & Sons' Sons at Broadway and Eighth Street, Hilton, Hughes & Denning, successors to A.T. Stewart & Co., New York's oldest and largest department store, what is now the Wanamaker store.

A.T. Stewart's Department Store in the 1850's was located on Broadway near Chambers Street. The founder of this store dared to hire women clerks, which was contrary to the convention of the time. For this he was denounced, especially by the clergy who predicted that such a store would become a brothel.

Mighty man, you were mistaken!
Woman found her due and place;
Home and hearth are not forsaken
Since she walks your way and pace.

There were McCreery & Co.; Aitkens; Arnold Constable & Co., on Broadway between 11th and 20th Streets; Hearn's; Ludwig Brothers; Le Boutelier Brothers; Callahan & Morrissey; R.H. Macy & Co., on 14th Street. B. Altman & Co., was at Sixth Avenue and 18th Street. Later came Siegel, Cooper & Co., diagonally across the street. Up the Avenue, there were Simpson, Crawford & Simpson; Adams & Co.; H. O'Neill & Co., and Ehrich Brothers. Stern Brothers were on 23rd Street, Lord & Taylor on Grand and Christie. One of New York's biggest

stores was Edward Ridley & Sons at Grand and Allen Streets.

The above-mentioned juvenile schemer would collect carfare for both of us when we made deliveries to these stores. I knew nothing about this and took it for granted that our errands were to be made on foot. When my chief found fault with the time consumed for our trips, this matter of petty theft was brought to light and after an investigation, the little crook was fired.

On the second day of my employment I was initiated in the complicated business of getting the lunches for eight or ten of our men. I will give a facsimile of the average day's orders:

A wants ham sandwich on rye with English mustard and butter, a large two-cent vinegar pickle, a pint of beer half-and-half, and some pretzels from the free lunch counter.

B orders sturgeon on hard roll, French mustard, a penny salt pickle, a pint of ale and porter, and liverwurst sandwiches from the free lunch counter.

C decides on raw meat on pumpernickel with chopped onions, plenty of pepper, a tomato, a pint of dark beer not much foam, radishes and anchovies from the free lunch counter.

Eight or ten of these exacting customers would tax anyone's patience and resourcefulness to the utmost, and verbal abuse if the one-cent pickle went by mistake to the two-cent customer, was a frequent reward.

As we got better acquainted with one another, some of them opened charge accounts with me for purchases made after midweek, to be settled for on payday. There was often a loss, but never a profit to me except in a handful of pretzels from the free-lunch counter when a friendly bartender was in charge. This went on until one day I met the boss's wife on my way back from this errand. In one hand I had a long slat covered with nails, set in pairs. Between each set of nails hung a "growler" (a tin can with handle used for conveying beer in pint lots). In the other hand, paper bags containing the food. I wanted to tip my derby hat and in this acrobatic performance I also tipped the beer. As Charlie McCarthy would say they "moidered" me when I got back.

I was a social caller at the boss's house and I am sure that his wife was shocked by what she had seen. I was called off this sort of work, and I actually missed the excitement of it and also the pretzels.

An errand boy's life was indeed hard. There were few buildings with freight elevators; most of them had hoists in open hatches. None had passenger lifts. Add to this situation the absence of telephones and you can readily see the amount of walking and climbing that was necessary.

It is Saturday with my first pay envelope containing three dollars. Out of this, by agreement with my brothers, I retained one dollar, they assuming the financing of an

overwhelming deficit. The chief item of my overhead was weekly board including my lunches, lodging, laundry, mending, and icebox privileges for bedtime snacks. This was five dollars and fifty cents. My regular workday expense was thirteen cents -- ten cents for carfare, two cents for apples and one cent for the New York Press, a Republican paper. Politically I leaned toward democratic principles, but the Press was the only one-cent paper published.

When I hear people speak of the "good old days" when men were men, when employers were not something hidden away, pushing buttons and directing affairs by remote control but real people, I cannot help but think of the human tendency to exaggerate the perfections of the past. Greed, arrogance, snobbishness, and all the brands of human failings were rampant as now, only in more camouflaged form and not yet checked by laws, labor unions, and public opinion.

The fact that the purchasing power of the dollar was several times that of today is no excuse for a condition that paid the majority of workers considerably less than a living wage.

In families where the breadwinner earned on an average less than eighteen dollars weekly, there was starvation, misery, sometimes almost justified drunkenness and even crime. Most of them indeed, lived by bread alone. The saloon, the stable, the vacant lot were club and playground.

Movements against child labor were branded socialistic and were fought even by those they would protect. The few pennies earned by the boys and girls seemed to be of greater importance than education. While the law of the state made school attendance compulsory up to age 14, working papers for full employment were issuèd at random to youngsters 12 years old. Those employed from school closing to late hours required no permits. Some of the successful men in later years may have called this a blessing in disguise, but the damage wrought by starvation wages left no argument for the defense of the system.

I have spoken of my employers as kindly, democratic men with good intentions. There were millions like them, but in the matter of wages, they followed the custom of the times. The system of learners'-pay was no doubt imported from abroad. Under it, the apprentice had to pay the employer.

One of the boys, Joe W., a fellow-employee, took a friendly interest and guided me in the handling of a jealous, semi-vicious gang of co-workers who were all too ready to have fun at the expense of the "Dutchman." In the first week, Joe proposed an exchange in instructions between us, he to teach me English, I to help him brush up on his German. I accepted his proposition, except that American Government and History was substituted for English. After my first lesson, Joe accentuating the matter of government by the people, emphasizing the privilege of the vote, I asked the question

as to Women's Rights in this. He was shocked by my question and I believe, even annoyed when I asked him whether his mother had any say at home. I became an advocate of Woman Suffrage there and then, and Joe some years after, became reconciled to this erstwhile unthinkable situation.

The sealing and posting of the mail and the occasional copying of correspondence on the letter-press took me to the office at closing time. Our head bookkeeper belonged to the last-minute-rush type of workers. Bills had to be checked and I took it upon myself to act as a living comptometer and guarantee the correctness of extensions and additions.

When night after night the office had to work overtime looking for an error in the trial-balance, I was the lucky discoverer of the mistake. "Move up another rung, Dutchman." Mr. Simson was a fine and patient teacher, willing to explain all the why's and wherefore's. He had a way of making the least among us feel his part in the whole. I tried to be like him, even to the acquisition of his Palmer-method handwriting. He was in close touch with everything and had a very special interest in my progress. I met him and his family socially, and I still do so to this day. He is now in his 92nd year and I frequently meet him when he visits his niece who is now my sister-in-law, the widow of my brother Moise.

Now and then I had to go with our city salesman as a sample carrier. This gentleman covered New York, Brooklyn,

Jersey City, Hoboken, Union Hill, a territory dotted with hundreds of small stores. In those horse-car days, it was not easy to get around and it took some tact to win sufficient favor in the eyes of an Irish driver or a German conductor to be allowed on the car platform with bulky baggage. It all, however, yielded its benefit in experience.

It was winter and most of my time was spent watching the salesman's line outside of stores. At noon I would get ten cents from him for lunch in ten minutes, while that gentleman would take his full hour for his luncheon, smoke and rest. This went along until Pesach. There were few Jewish restaurants or delicatessen stores in our territory, and if so, ten cents would not have bought much of the special "schell-Pesach" food. I complained to the salesman about this and he threatened to have me fired. However, I became plaintiff in the controversy, to the end that I was promoted to an inside job, assistant to the factory order-clerk, with an advance in salary to four dollars weekly.

Stern application, ready will,
Soon brought me to the fore.
One Saturday, straight from the till,
I got a dollar more.

An added duty was that of custodian of the keys, opening the place at seven-thirty A.M., closing after we had the "all out" call from the four floors we occupied. In season there was quite some overtime lasting to ten P.M., and in the event of frequent emergency repairs to the gas-engines

that powered the plant, to midnight and later. It may sound strange to hear me say that I liked this. While there was no extra pay, we did receive 50 cents as supper money and I knew good places serving 25-cent dinners, like Goldberg's on Wooster Street and Carolina Reich on Lispenard Street. The remaining 25 cents I would put in my Nickel Savings bank that locked itself with the first coin and opened automatically when the 40th was inserted.

I was looking forward with happy anticipation to the first grand opening of my bank when I noticed that my shoes needed soling. When I asked my brother Emile for the amount to defray this expense, he referred me to my Nickel Reserve Bank. I could never find a reasonable explanation for this attitude which did not conform with his otherwise ready liberality toward me. It took some years before my ardor for saving returned.

I was conscious of the seriousness of my added responsibility. About a hundred and fifty people started work promptly at eight, and some had to be on hand at seven-thirty to prepare things. Transportation, especially in winter, was often uncertain. To be late would have meant panic on Greene Street.

My promotion was not accepted with unanimous approval by my fellow-workers. There were older boys, American born, employed longer, and they resented this preference to this

"Dutchman." Many feet were stretched out for me to stumble over. Some banana peels deliberately placed in one of the aisles brought to my wellwishers the realization of their hopes, resulting in injury to me but also in a thorough clearing up of the situation and a breaking up of the vicious conspiracy.

My immediate superior who was with the house for eighteen years, earning $18 weekly, was to prepare me to take over his work, to release him to join our sales force. I learned too fast to suit him and he tried to wear me out, or as colloquially expressed, "to get my goat." When I became a salesman three years after, he was driving a milk wagon.

But not all was strife. I had friends and wellwishers, and before long I had somehow gained the good will of the majority.

Each dramatic event, planned for my downfall, seemed to bring me reward. When the city-salesman wanted me fired, I was promoted and advanced in salary; and again, after the banana incident, I slipped into a higher bracket on the payroll. In August I received my second raise, to six dollars.

One of the partners, in charge of manufacturing, was a genial, sociable person, not very forceful and quite willing to place responsibility on his assistants. He came from a small town in Hessen and enjoyed reminiscing with me about his childhood experiences. I was an appreciative listener

to this. He spoke and pronounced English poorly and I sometimes corrected him because some of his sayings brought riot and fun when his back was turned. It was hard to keep a straight face hearing him say to a stock girl, "Take down your drawers and let me see what you got in 'em." I spent nearly three years in factory work and this experience was very helpful to me when I established my own business in later years.

And the year-end's spoken praises,
Telling me I'm doing great,
From three dollars, raise on raises
Reaching then an even eight.

At Christmas I was called into the private office, where Mr. Simson in the presence of his two partners, commented favorably on my progress and notified me of an advance in salary to eight dollars, stating that few boys worked themselves up from three dollars to eight dollars in less than a year. He also presented me with a silk umbrella and a pair of gloves, gifts in appreciation of personal services rendered him, especially during weeks when he was away on business trips. During his absence I slept at his house to guard his wife and little daughter and two maids. He lived on Park Avenue at 94th Street opposite the Armory, then a dismal section of New York. The stillness of the night was interwupted by the sound of puffing locomotives pulling New York Central and New Haven trains through the tunnels. The house shook from the vibration and I was sometimes sure that the

spooks I expected at Grandma's house at Ingwiller had followed me over here.

One night I was awakened by the lady of the house who claimed that there were robbers in the basement. The lady, the maids and I, heavily armed with fire-pokers and shovels, descended to the basement cautiously, however making enough noise to give the cowardly intruders time to get away. They didn't get away though, and there on the kitchen floor, munching a snack of cheese, were two mice caught in one trap.

The year 1892 was a Presidential election year and business was poor. I nevertheless received another advance in salary to ten dollars.

Grover Cleveland was elected and a subsequent financial panic brought business almost to a halt. Each Saturday, employees were laid off for an indefinite period, and the usual joyful anticipation of payroll distribution was displaced by jitters brought on by the uncertainty of the job. I was among the thirty percent surviving. The depression was ruinous but fortunately of short duration, compared to later financial panics. Under the then prevailing system, a small power-group could bring about or prevent such a calamity at its own will.

In the fall of 1894 the firm split and I was taken along by the two partners who had merged with another establishment, forming Levi, Simson & Rosenthal, at 47 Greene Street. Through this change I became a city-salesman,

successor to the gentleman who three years before threatened me with dismissal.

I was the youngest of three city-salesmen, and my trade consisted of small neighborhood stores. There were hundreds of them in those days. Inter-city transportation, larger families, the non-existence of chain stores, gave many small merchants a chance to succeed. Most of them were hard working and thrifty, and despite their limited capital, were good credit risks for their requirements. In most cases man and wife worked together and the families lived above, behind, or at least close to the store. This helped to make the salesman a personal as well as a business friend. Except Tuesday, market day, we found our customer in his place. Most stores kept open until ten P.M., and many calls could be made in the course of a day.

The sociability between buyer and seller called for a lot of treating to drinks and cigars. I was only twenty years old, of boyish appearance, and most people hesitated to accept hospitality from one so young. There were enough, however, that would join me, so that two or three milk punches (very little rum, please) during a morning would not be unusual.

I considered my age and appearance a great handicap and it used to hurt me to see my bearded, high-hatted competitors walk out for a drink with a buyer, call him by first name, heaping silent contempt on the inexperienced kid that

was wedging his way in. Of course, there were cases where Madame was the boss or where Mamma presented a growing daughter. There youth had its chance.

And there were those sociable beings who refused nothing and no one, and smoked the OP (other people's) brand cigars exclusively. Among those I remember an Englishman who was buyer in a growing store on Broadway, Brooklyn. This store grew to be what is now one of New Jersey's largest department stores. Even then it occupied two floors, had floorwalkers and private offices for the owners. John, my English friend, the buyer, would arrange to meet me in a nearby mirrored booze palace, if and when he could dodge the boss or floorwalker. Cocktails were two for a quarter. When business was good we would have two rounds, three drinks for him and one for me. Now and then he would speak of Charlie, a floorwalker, who would be over to join us. Charlie never came and advance pay for his drinks was left with the bartender at John's suggestion. As the plot revealed after many months, "Charlie" was strictly fictitious. John was both Hamlet and the Ghost.

My fixed salary of $11 a week was continued as a drawing account against a seven and a half percent commission. My sales for the first year were less than $10,000 and a few customers like John made ruinous inroads on any surplus that might have accrued.

At the end of the year, two city-men left to go in business on their own. A new man was taken and I was given some additional territory so that in the second year I doubled my sales. I was very happy in gaining ground until I accidently found out that the new man received ten percent commission. This discrimination upset me and brooding over the injustice, I became susceptible to overtures made by a smooth talker. He hired me at a salary that was below my current earnings but included a lot of promises that only materialized under much pressure over the years.

This change in jobs was a great mistake. Had I frankly discussed my grievances with my former employers, I am sure matters could have been adjusted satisfactorily. I had been treated by them like a son; was given opportunities within the range of my capabilities, but apparently I preferred petting my grievances to anything else.

An incident in my first position that offhand does not seem important is that of disappearing cigars from the desks of salesmen and from the private office of Mr. Simson, one of the firm.

I had returned from my day's route shortly before closing time. One of my customers who did not expect me on that day, had mailed an order to which he wanted to add. Not finding the order with the order-clerk, I went to the private office and looked for it there. I did not find it

but some mail on Mr. Simson's desk from our far-western man interested me. I sat down and read it. I heard footsteps, turned in the swivel-chair and there stood Mr. Simson. In my confusion, I closed the desk and silently stole away. Mr. Simson went to a wardrobe, took a slug of whiskey and went off. I was one of the few cigar smokers in the place and naturally was under extreme suspicion. Mr. Simson fortunately that evening met the order-clerk on the El station and hinted at his shocking experience of a few minutes before. The clerk mentioned my search for the order, all of which could have served as a pretext for my overt act.

Several days after, an office boy stooped in the presence of the boss, dropping a cigar from his pocket. He did not smoke but "bought them for his father." Mr. Simson took the cigar, broke it in half, and asked the little crook whether his father also smoked the pin that had been inserted. I only heard of all this after Mr. Simson told the story to the Geismars.

This experience helped me to an attitude of tolerance to anyone judged by circumstantial evidence, a matter that would have disqualified me as a juror on most murder trials and many other criminal cases.

I changed my position on January 1, 1896, going from a big firm with broad views to a very small one with a narrow outlook, penny-wise policies, and an exaggerated estimate of

its own importance. My brother Emile had just been made a junior partner and I was to be the next harvester of a plum.

When after about six weeks I was by indirection asked to itemize my weekly expense account of car and ferry fares also other sundry penny items, I decided to quit. My second mistake was that I did not carry out this decision.

The firm did most of its business in New York City and vicinity. The head of it felt about traveling expenses as do some people about doctors' bills. In 1897 however, he plunged into the risk of a trip through New York State and Pennsylvania. I was IT, and before I started, I was worn to shreds by warnings against pitfalls endangering the expense allowance of six dollars a day. My first stop on this trip was Albany, New York, Hotel Kenmore. The cheapest "suite" at two dollars a day, with meals, was a sort of penthouse cage reached by a fire stairs from the top landing of a turtle-speed elevator. A coil of rope, substitute for a fire-escape, attracted my attention when I entered the room. I studied the instructions in the use of this life-saver and held a one-man fire drill before retiring. Like in Paris, I again found a defective gas jet.

I fell asleep from exhaustion and dreamed of fire and explosion. Half awake, out of bed, girded with rope, I rushed to the door. Neither smell of smoke nor the crackling sound of burning wood -- end of a nightmare!

The next day I walked and talked, bent over trunks, unpacked and packed, wept and worried until 2:30 P.M. I then took my first order amounting to $32. This put new life in me and I finished the day with three orders in the total of $175 and as the supper guest of my last customer, Mr. Stark, a man I will never forget. He took me to the station and I reached Troy, New York, all keyed up and at one with the world.

The next day I covered Troy, Cohoes, Schenectady, and reached Utica at night, "cleanly skunked." This in salesman-parlance meant no orders.

At Utica the next day I packed and unpacked my 150 samples of babies' caps four times. The day's sales were six dollars and two pages of numbers taken down by cowardly "lookers" who did not have the courage to turn me down flat. Any salesman knows the hypocrisies committed under the subterfuge of "taking down numbers."

Next stop: Syracuse. Awake all night at the Globe Hotel alongside of the New York Central Railroad tracks. Big stores, broken back, "bum" business; only promises. Decided to stay over on an uncertain promise by one who would look the next day. Shed tears listening to the sentimental music of the "Bohemian Girl," given in a 20-30-40 Opera House.

My luck changed at Rochester and Buffalo so that I finished the week with sales of about $600. At ten percent, the calculated commission, this would be $60 earned. I

reported expenses for the week of $53. My salary was $30, hence $23 "in the hole."

At Elmira on Tuesday evening, I was greeted by mail commanding me to return home. On my way back I did a little business in Binghamton and Scranton, and had a whirlwind wind-up in Wilkes-Barre with an order of over $400. Deeply wounded, I returned from there, resolved to quit the pikers. I, however, spent five more years with them and it took me five years after that to partly regain my stifled spirit of enterprise. I never fully recovered and in my own venture remained a healthy piker, over-conservative in most things, taking only an occasional impulsive fling.

Two years after I weakened to the proposal of a New England trip in January, starting at Bangor, Maine, and finishing at Bridgeport, Connecticut. This trip was a financial success.

I only repeated it once and the territory was turned over to a newcomer who looked like a bargain, without a drawing-account, but had subtle talents for leg-pulling which he brought into full play.

My pioneering in the Eastern territory served me well when I went into my own business and then made it my chief and personal selling territory.

After four years with the firm, I was offered an interest in profits. There were so many strings attached to

this offer that I preferred to go on with a fixed salary. After another year some of the knots were taken out of the strings and I became a prospective sharer in uncertain profits however with definite minimum guarantees.

I openly stated my future plans of going in business for myself, assuring the firm that it would never be as their competitor, and that any change would be made at the end of the season only, and upon reasonable notice. I negotiated with many prospects. Some of my interviews were held right in the firm's office, so that nothing was going on behind my associates' backs.

A scheming fellow-employee and his father-in-law managed to conceive a plot of which I became an innocent victim. Had that been openly discussed with me, all suspicion of my participation would have been readily dispelled. But my supersensitive brother, then a full partner, in silence petted his unfounded grievances. I quit at the end of the year to enter the Ladies' Hats manufacturing business, the last thing that I ever wanted to be in. This was December 1, 1902.

My brother, accepting as fact the finely spun plot of the conspiring employee, had become difficult in the last months. Till then we had been very close to each other, shared the same room prior to his marriage; he had financed, together with our brother Moise, my trip to America, and my

first year's deficit. He was stubborn, close-mouthed, and never heard my side. Added to his resentment was the subtly injected venom of his wife's family who it seems had plans of marriage for me of which I knew nothing and to which I could not have agreed.

The announcement of my betrothal at that time fanned the fire of their rage to white heat. In another chapter I will deal at greater length on this unfortunate subject in the hope that some reader may take from it the lesson or realization that trifles like white lies, the addition or omission of one word, even the intonation of speech, may grow to gigantic mountains of discontent and animosity.

I will interrupt the story of my business life at this point to return to it later, and now will cover my social and cultural life up to this point.

CHAPTER XVIII: SOCIAL LIFE 1891 - 1902

It is not difficult to visualize the effect the transplanting from an Old World small town to this New World metropolis had on a box sixteen and a half years old. I was bewildered and homesick but also inquisitive, thrill hunting and optimistic.

Thirty-five hundred miles away from the center of family control, under the less authentic dominion of my brothers, then respectively 23 and 24 years old, I felt a freedom mingled with the responsibility impressed upon me by my parents as to honesty, decency and attainment of success.

A feeling of slight educational superiority over my brothers, a spirit that I tactlessly revealed from time to time, brought about an occasional squabble in which, right or wrong, I was usually subdued. A letter from home, understandingly written by my diplomatic mother, commented joyfully on the good part of an apparent report that had been made by my brothers, but also appealed to me to put aside stubbornness, and to listen, obey, or at least compromise.

My brothers had a remarkably large circle of acquaintances quite ready to receive me, and I accepted their hospitality wherever I thought the offer to be sincere and logical. I naturally felt most at home with those of my own

age, and I soon struck out on my own. I met many people through the boys I was first introduced to and of whom I have written above. These were nearly all Bavarian emigres but I was anxious to meet honest-to-goodness American boys and girls, learn their ways, and acquire their nonchalance. On summer evenings, folks sat on the steps and in the "airies" of their houses, the young and the old, each in separate groups. I was ambitious to acquire the suave manner of the native boys with the girls, most of whom looked upon us "Dutchmen" with more or less of contemptuous indifference.

I was asked to join the Excelsior Literary Club, with a two-dollar annual membership fee, payable in advance. I never could explain why it was named literary, for besides Cushing's Manual on parliamentary ruling, I never saw a book at the Club. I doubt that the U.S. Congress at that time adhered as strictly to the text and spirit of the Manual as we did. The two chief purposes of the Club were an entertainment and Ball in winter and an outing in the summer.

A wrong committed by me in connection with our first outing to Greenwald's Botanical Gardens on Staten Island has surely been forgiven by the victim, but still lurks in the remote corners of my conscience as an unethical act despite special circumstances that might be considered in the impartial judging of the case.

Every boy had invited a girl. I became frightened

at the thought of inviting one. The boys put their heads together and suggested Tessie, the best-looking girl on the block. I should have suspected something had I asked myself why this good-looking, fine girl should be a left-over. I found out when I extended the invitation in formal manner to Miss K. (Tessie). "I would be so pleased, but you must ask Mamma." The boys knew about this and also Mamma's condition.

The first hazard, the invitation, easily removed, I courageously proceeded with the business of getting consent. Mamma K., in formal German, considered it an honor to have her daughter escorted by so worthy and chivalrous a gentleman and would be glad to consent on condition that she would go along as chaperone.

Onlythose who ever attended such an outing can appreciate the awkwardness of this situation. Before the day set, I invented an excuse that cancelled the invitation, and I was sure understanding Tessie bore no ill feeling.

Under more pressure from the boys, I took my cousin to the outing, bringing the wrath of mother K. upon my head, so that I did not dare to go back to the block that summer.

When I arrived in New York, I inquired for the family M., who were tenants of my folks at Ingwiller. They had moved to Strasbourg before I was born and after that crossed the Atlantic to New York. I had never met them. I had heard a great deal about this family and I felt that I

wanted to see them. I was warned by my brothers that they were highbrows, "uberstudiert," that one of the daughters, a domineering person, had insulted my oldest brother, that they were so German in their ways, that the Alsatians shunned them. However, I wanted to see for myself.

It so happened that one of my fellow-workers asked me one day about my town of origin. When he heard it named, he exclaimed, "That's where my father's cousins, the M's come from." The next Sunday he took me to see them and there was great rejoicing. I accepted an invitation for dinner on the following Sunday. It took me all week to muster enough courage to announce and explain my planned absence from dinner at home on the coming Sunday. There was displeasure and even resentment on the part of the household.

The M. family then consisted of the mother, two daughters of about thirty, two sons, one of 26, the other 24. They lived in a very modest flat on upper Madison Avenue. The father had died shortly after their arrival here. He had been born in Mainz, a matter that would explain the duo-nationality the family was accused of by their Alsatian Landsleute. They said of them that they were French with the French and German with the "Ashkenasim" (Germans). In Europe the father had been a migrant dentist, specializing in tooth extraction. He practiced on man and beast. He was "ein reisender Zahnarzt" (traveling dentist) or pronounced in

Alsatian jargon, "ein rasender" meaning raving, in pure German.

Mail from the villages and hamlets where he practiced was slow and uncertain and money transfers to the family often difficult for morethan one reason. Here was I, the son of their old-country accommodating landlords, repairing the broken link in the old acquaintance of our families. I was flattered and pleased by the cordial reception, and even the 85 cents pistachio Tarte from Weil's Bakery, evoked a speech in "hochdeutsch" that would have nauseated most of my Landsleute, but tickled my vanity to the utmost.

We became fast friends, and to my close association with this family can be ascribed my cultivation of a taste for art, music, poetry and literature. I will return to this relationship in several accounts of important events in my later life. We remained intimate friends to the end. They are all gone now but I bear them fond memories and eternal gratitude for pointing the way to much that is very precious to me now.

A few years before my arrival here, my brothers found a first cousin of our father, named Solomon Oury. Father had never met him. He was born at Scherwiller, Alsace, where two of my grandfather's brothers had lived. (See "Oury Uhry" use of family name on the family tree in Book I.) Oury came to America in the '70's, settling in Newark, New Jersey.

His household, with six children, was a perpetual wheel of hospitality and was rarely without guests. My brothers and I spent nearly every other Sunday and all holidays there. His house was the meeting-place of many Alsatians and it was at times hard for me to realize that I was in America. The Court-language was the home jargon. The Alsatian prejudices against most things German, were deeply rooted. I recall an incident at Sunday-night supper with the usual "Minion" of guests.

A new kind of herring was much relished and praised, when one of the guests asked the hostess what the brand of this herring was. When he heard it to be Bismark herring, he pushed away his plate in disgust, saying, "Pfui!"

Oury owned a thriving beer saloon which he rented to another party about the time I landed, to become a collector for a large brewery. This was an enviable position, a combination of salesman and credit man of whom it was expected that on his weekly visits, he would "have them set up" for all the boys that were around. A collector with 50 to 75 customers acquired a goodly following and in many instances was chosen by political parties as a vote-getting candidate. Oury, too, was elected Freeholder (Councilman) for one term.

Newark in those days seemed miles away from New York. Life there resembled that of a small midwestern town rather than that of New York or Boston. The families lived in private

houses, which most of them owned. The only semblance to apartment houses was in the two-family dwellings. New Jersey Building and Loan Associations promoted and encouraged home building and general thrift.

We soon became well acquainted with many Jewish families in Newark. The temple and congregational activities were a fine medium for social contact. We spent all the Jewish holidays there. There were then two large Reform Congregations, B'nai Jeshurim for the German Jews and the "Behmish Shul" (Bohemian Shul) for those originating from the land giving it its title. While most B'nai Jeshurim members were Americans by naturalization or birth, the Rabbi still preached in Germ an.

In 1897, my brother Emile married Hattie, the oldest Oury daughter. They took up residence in Newark despite the fact that Emile's business was in New York, and commuting by trolley, Pennsylvania Railroad, ferry-boat, and horse-car was not a simple matter. The relationship between father-in-law and son-in-law was all too intimate. Emile was led from his New York social life to an atmosphere of respectable "back-of-saloon" life, as it prevailed in Newark and other cities of that size. To many a tired businessman with strong prejudice against higher education and culture, the back-room in their saloon served as club. Emile and his cronies did not go there to drink but rather to play or watch games of poker, pinochle, solo, skat, or "Glaveryass." While Emile was not in any of the regular games, he was a willing pinch-hitter. Even I was

drawn into a poker game one dull evening when the sixth man was needed. I could not afford the fifty-cents-limit game, but Oury with the sanction of the other players, gave me guarantees as to the limit of my possible losses. I was looked upon as the innocent, conservative, harmless novice, a situation which I capitalized in putting through a few "bluffs." One of the kibitzers, who saw me "stand pat" on a pair of deuces and get away with the pot, offered me five dollars to show my hand and convince the old wise-guys that they had been "taken for a ride." The fun this would give me, added to the five dollars, was too much to resist, and I showed the third best hand in the deal to the grief of the two players involved and the elation of the others. From then on I was nicknamed "young Leiter." Leiter was a speculator in the Chicago wheat-pit and had shortly before cornered the market in a most sensational way. I came out of the game considerably ahead but never sat in again.

We felt very much at home with these Newark cousins and all went well until Moise announced his engagement. This somehow brought about a change in attitude. I managed to keep the peace, but when two years later, I announced my own engagement, something snapped again, and I became the innocent victim of the wrath of the senior female member of that family, as mentioned in a previous chapter.

Her subtly injected venom brought about an estrangement between me and this family, my brother Emile included,

that kept us apart for many years. I, however, had the satisfaction at the Golden Wedding celebration of mutual friends some 25 years after to have tears of repentance shed over my shoulders by the then-aged instigator of the unfortunate mess.

A reconciliation between my brother and myself had long before that been effected, but some who would sooner be mad than glad, to this day continue to enjoy their sulking.

Together with the German boys of whom I spoke above, I made many social contacts with Jewish families residing in the Fifties. While we were still "clumsy" and "Dutch" in our way with most American girls, there were two sisters of south-German extraction who made us most welcome at their home.

We named ourselves the Jolly Four Quartet and rehearsed German songs to legitimatize our title, the girls acting as accompanists. The hospitality accorded us by their family was overwhelming. The parties with music, song, kissing games and what not, became social events to which the neighborhood youth looked forward with joyful anticipation and a fervent hope for a bid. Our crowd retaliated with group-gifts at opportune times. One of the boys and I amended this expression of appreciation by taking the girls to entertainments and Balls given in those days by Lodges and Charitable Societies. These payoffs had to be carefully budgetted in view of my very modest salary, but the item of

corsage flowers at 50 cents a bunch, remained steadily fixed. A Third Avenue florist performed miracles with a few blossoms and maiden ferns set in a cone of embossed paper.

I was a stickler for correct dress and we always went formal. The fact that my brother Moise's full-dress suit fit me as if made to my measure, also my brother's weekly absence from home between Sunday night and Friday, was very helpful in satisfying my ambition to be correct. All went well until late one Monday night. Moise came back to New York unexpectedly to attend the French Ball, then a leading event in New York cafe society.

His full-dress suit and I had gone out before he arrived home. When I came in "after the ball was over," there, in the dim gaslight, loomed my brother's figure abed. I was surprised, lowered the light and lightened my step,- all to no avail. "Where were you on this night, sporting my suit...?" In an attempt to appease him, I replied, "Never mind, I will buy my own dress-suit in the..." "What do you mean <u>will</u>? You have bought one right now. I'll tell you tomorrow morning how much." Thus I acquired my first full-dress suit at the fair price of tendollars. I wore it at my own wedding and it was one of the best investments I ever made. Apparently, two-thirty A.M. was the psychological moment for me to make investments, but who is around or sober at that hour except bank robbers and such.

In his dress-suit I looked stunning,
'Til on one important night,
For it he himself was gunning,-
It and I had taken flight.

While I took to dancing like a duck to water, I joined a dancing class and further expanded my social circle.

Summer vacations have always been fine media for meeting people and continues to be so to this day, but not quite in the old degree of intimacy. Sharing with others the facilities of the farm boarding-house, brought about a chumminess that was a basis for both constructive intimacy and sometimes disastrous familiarity. My first vacation of one week I spent in Newark as the guest of my cousins. Even with the low cost of board on farms, my eight-dollar salary shut out any thought I might have had of going to such resorts.

The next year, however, with a ten-dollar weekly income, I shared a room with one of my pals at Johnson's Farm in Big Indian in the Catskill Mountains. We paid fourteen dollars together and we got our money's worth.

A further advance in salary, and the inducement of being with friends, brought us to the Blythewood Hotel at Tannersville, for a two-week vacation the next year. There, together, we paid $35 weekly. We were expert drivers of horses and frequently hired eight-seaters and took the girls for a ride. When we pulled up at the Kaaterskill, Hotel or Mountain House, two young men with a harem of blondes and brunettes, we were the envy of our contemporaries who could not have collected such a bevy of girls from their over-chaperoned

crowd.

This Blythewood crowd, in the Fall, formed the Mountaineer Bowling Club, also a Euchre Club. Each girl gave a party at her home during the winter and it can be readily seen how extensive our social life became.

The brother of one of our boys was business manager for the Damrosch Opera Company, and once during each season would give us tickets for a club Opera party. A Fifth Avenue horse-drawn bus would pick us up to take us to the Metropolitan and later to the Fidelio Club for a midnight supper and dance. Several marriages resulted from these clubs and I kept up friendship with some of these couples to this day.

I was slightly younger than the average male member and I hope to be forgiven at this stage if I include even some of the girls, should they now become identified. There were the Kimballs, the Goldmarks, the Strauss', the Freunds, the Bowmans, the Rosenbaums, Stanley Graf, Sig Adler, the Rothschilds, Frieda Haberman, Joe Strauss, and others.

In that period one could call on young ladies without being gossiped about or highjacked into matrimony. I called on many girls and there was extra safety in the division of my attentions.

In those pre-radio and pre-movie days, there was a lot of evening visiting. Stage plays were few and theater attendance very limited despite the low cost of seats. At

our best theaters, prices ranged from $1.50 in the orchestra to 50 cents in the family circle. Vaudeville was popularized during the '90's with charges of 20 to 50 cents a seat. Then there were the stock companies that did everything from Shakespeare and Uncle Tom's Cabin to Ben Hur and the Black Crook. I will return to the subject of theatrical entertainment and not go too far astray from my attempt to draw a picture of the development of my social life.

There was card playing, mostly by men. Women occasionally joined them in games of lotto, Bell and Hammer, or even penny-ante poker. On winter evenings, neighbors would gather for a sociable game of "draw." I received my diploma in the art after a two-year observation period at my boarding-house.

Folks got up at an early hour. Business opened at eight or before, and these evening sessions rarely lasted beyond 11 o'clock. While in the beginning I was only an onlooker in the play, I became a full participant in the AW (aufwartung, i.e. refreshments) that followed. What has become of the good digestion with which the generation of that day was blessed? In our household we always had a ready nucleus for a game and it was convenient for our neighbors to reach us by fire-escape or a whistle from across the street.

The Lodges with sick, death, and social benefits attracted many people. Literary clubs, chess clubs, musical

societies, were less popular. There were, however, thecharity organizations, most of them provincial in their makeup, with hyphenated names, a matter to which I earnestly objected. I felt that in America, there was no reason for naming groups "UngarischerUnterstutzung-Verein" or the "Schwabischer Sangerbund" the "Krakauer Verein" or the "Societe Israelite Francaise." I had however a high regard for the fine work that some of them did.

I was on the verge of asking one of my friends to propose me in his Masonic Lodge when I became the victim of an abuse of the "fraternal," that made me hesitate for the time being and keep a watchful eye open for more manifestations of similar unfair practices.

I came to the Commercial Hotel in a New York state city in the late afternoon and was told that I would have to wait for a room. This was in days when room reservations in ordinary circumstances was not necessary. A neighbor from New York came in with two men and they were assigned to rooms in my sight by the clerk who thought the coast was clear. My New York neighbor, a first visitor at this hotel, confidentially and with much bravado told me how it was done. I saw quite a little of this sort of a thing and while I was sure that the great majority of Masons looked upon this breach of ethics with the same contempt that I did, I never quite forgave the hypocrisies of a selfish minority that practiced them. In

later years I regretted my inflexible stand since I bore great admiration for those who religiously practice the fine tenets of their Orders.

While I was not a "joiner" in the popular sense of the word, I became affiliated with the Montefiore Home on my 21st birthday and later on with the Infants' League of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum, the Sheltering Guardian Society, and the Young Folks' League Rodeph Sholom. Most of these were absorbed by the Federation at its founding.

From time to time friends asked me to let them propose me to their respective social clubs. I happened to have been born in the "approved geographical zone," and most of the sponsors proudly stressed the South German origin of the memberships. When I had partly lived down the resentment I felt by this infamous discrimination, I told one would-be sponsor that I would join his club on condition that two others in our group of four couples would be invited to membership. He frankly stated his doubts as to their eligibility for the reason that the paternal grandfather of L. came from Posen to the United States. This man was here in the days of the California Gold Rush and took part in it. L's parents were both American natives, so was his wife and from Bavarian Jewish extraction, but all this did not make L. blutrein.

The case of I.L., the other pal, was similarly vicious. In later years conditions made it necessary for

these clubs to moderate these stringent rules of admission. I have forgiven them and have been a frequent guest at these clubs. I have never missed any of the special offerings of these societies and had more time for the things I like better than card playing or golfing as my next chapter will show.

At this point I must return to my relationship to the three boys that were my first pals here. L. inherited some money from an uncle and also held a position that was more remunerative than those of the rest of us. With more money to spend, he gradually drifted away from us. We remained on friendly terms with him but rarely met him. He has now gone from life to life, leaving his wife, the hospitable sweetheart of our quartette days, no children, but a very substantial estate.

The second one, S., the strong man, athlete, entertainer in the art of muscle manipulation, leaning to sports from prize fights to horse racing, went the way of so many gamblers and became enmeshed in a web of circumstances that made it advisable for his uncle to arrange his forced private deportation to his father's home in Germany.

He later returned to New York, paid up his debts amounting to several thousands, was re-employed by his former firm, but the lure of the gambling table dragged him down again. He left the States, worked hard and well in England

and built up a very large manufacturing business in London. Relations were strained between us for several years before his departure. This was on account of my firm stand in collecting a money debt due me.

One day, long after, I received a package from him containing a half-dozen neckties, his own product, with a message stating that he still counts me among his sincerest friends. He visited me in 1940 when he came to New York to purchase materials replacing such that had been banned under the boycott against Nazi German goods. He has children and grandchildren and now is a high-ranking English citizen.

My early association with him acted in the reverse and is perhaps responsible for my aversion to gambling. I have never attended a horse race in America. Such indulgence on my visits to Paris was prompted more by the search for style information than to be thrilled by the races.

In the matter of prize fights, I became immune to the fever at my first attendance. S. took me to a bout in a Bowery theater, between Battling Levitsky and another. This was about 1895. We sat in the balcony. Little time had elapsed when I felt there was going to be a knockout somewhere. It happened, but not on the platform. When Levitsky's opponent drew blood, I saw it first and nothing again until I opened my eyes in the foyer, coughing up some whiskey and gasping for the pure Bowery air. I never again went to a prizefight.

R., the most conservative of the four, stayed out of some of our activities. An innate shyness, especially in the presence of women, frightened him away from some of our escapades. His early progress in business was slow. With a shoestring capital advanced by an uncle, he started, together with a young German Jewish chemist, the manufacture of essential flavors. From a humble beginning, by close application, thrift, and a faculty to win the confidence of others, he built up a fine business. In later years the fine reputation of his trademark brought many flattering bids for his business and finally, in the 50th year of its existence, one that was irresistible, which he accepted.

Throughout the years we have remained close friends and now that both of us have joined the brigade of park-bench loafers, we get together at least once a week. On rainy days we match our wits in non-alcoholic gin rummy for a stake, the annual total of which would not even buy one bottle of the good stuff that has lent its name to the game.

It is sunshine all the time when R. and I meet. Mutual respect, honest and sincere interest in one another, have built a rock of friendship that will never crumble but will stand out as a monument of a life-long relationship free from hypocrisy, solidly founded on the base of truth and affection. Be it the will of the Almighty, that surrounded by our dear ones, we may march together in the beauty of our

setting sun to the horizon and the sphere where true friendship lives unto eternity.

I must record a special one of the well-budgeted outings of the quartette in the days of the shedding of our green horns. It was the Fourth of July. The Manhattan Beach Hotel with a dining veranda seating 2000 people, was the pole to which the upper crust of society was attracted. Horse races at Brighton were the gala event of the day, similar to the Grand Prix or Drague at Longchamps or Auteuil. We went to the more plebeian bicycle races at Sheepshead Bay and managed to reach the Hotel by five P.M.

We lost our appetites when we read the figures on the menu. The head waiter, beating time to our misery with his pencil against his order pad, unsuccessfully recommended the sort of dishes that whetted our appetites. We had visions of rack and ruin ahead of us to our next pay-day. I spoke up first and in trembling voice ordered two soft-boiled eggs, giving the leit-motif to the party's chorus of orders. Fried -- scrambled -- hard-boiled -- rose to a crescendo. Instead of champagne, we ordered two bottles of beer to drown our sorrows. That done, we settled down to watch the rolling surf, ignoring the anxious look of the head waiter who nervously watched the hands of the clock moving to a perpendicular.

It was six o'clock; the races were over. Thousands streamed to the veranda, shaking hands lined with greenbacks

with the head waiters. Hundreds stood around, and our table, cleared of all but a few remants of beer, was picked as a hopeful spot by the standees. Among them was a gentleman who lost out in the scramble when we finally rose to go. He was the owner of a Brooklyn store, and when three years later I became a salesman, I called on this stranger. After my speech of introduction, he asked the unusual question: "Where were you on July 4th, 1892?" I could not readily answer but he told me, -- "On the Manhattan Beach Hotel veranda." I am not sure whether he ever forgave me because I rarely had any chance to do business with him.

About 1896, I met A.H. through S.R. The two had struck up a spontaneous friendship as brothers in misery on a selling trip, the one trying to sell men's neckwear, the other, tinsel fabrics. The fact that A.H. came from Bavaria made him readily eligible as a member of our "exclusive" group. He called on the theatrical trade and frequently had passes for shows and even the opera.

A.H. somehow became more intimate with me than with the others. I was a steady house guest at his brother's home where he lived. Our tastes for the arts were more developed than those of the others, and we have held together to this day. In 1926, when I retired from the millinery business, I entered the employ of his firm, a matter that

I will refer to at greater length when I will cover those years.

Like myself, A.H. could also wear his older brother's good clothes and together we sometimes paraded in them on upper Seventh Avenue or midtown Fifth Avenue on Sunday afternoons.

Herman's coat and pants were fitting
Adolf, like a measured glove,
But my brother's hat was sitting
Sort of loosely up above.

Brushed and slicked we went parading,
None could say that we were flops,
On the Avenue, crusading --
Schma Beni! I feel some drops!

People rushing for a shelter,
Standing under this and that,
In this sudden helter-skelter,
I had lost my brother's hat.

CHAPTER XIX: CULTURAL LIFE

I have previously referred to the influence on my cultural life through my association with the Michel family. Its artistic temperament was most directly expressed in the poetry of Fred, written chiefly in German. Some occasional gems in Alsatian dialect were unique in construction and portrayed the simplicity of wholesome, natural life much in the manner of Heine, Schubert, Beethoven, Millet and others.

Fred was super-sensitive and often sad and depressed. He should have been subsidized, to be released from the necessity of making a living, to plunge into the realm of his dreams and to ride on his Pegasus to the Utopia that only souls like his can visualize. He was never married and as far as I know, never had been in love with any special woman. He worshipped his mother and one sister and frequently clashed with the other, a matter that I and others could readily understand. Necessity and accident led him to the prosaic millinery business. As I recall his creations, none of the art of his soul ever entered into the disharmony of his hats. When he felt the labor-pangs of a verse about to be born, no buyer nor profit could distract him.

His personal requirements were very modest but he

showered attentions on his mother, sister and friends. He had a special gift for making the acquaintance of writers, musicians and artists of all description. Kaintz, Sonnenthal, Frau Sorma, and many visiting German artists accepted his hospitality. I was a regular fellow-guest at these functions and I envied these artists not only for their God-given talents but also for their good appetites.

I must tell of an incident occurring at one of these soirees. I held conversation with a middle-aged gentleman who was the image of Emperor William I of Prussia, grandfather of William II of World War I and Doorn exile fame. His side whiskers, his Prussian appearance and manner induced me to ask him whether anyone had ever called attention to his resemblance to the old Kaiser. To this he answered: "Yes, frequently." Our host overheard this and cast looks of warning at me that I could not understand. At the first opportunity, the host informed me that our bewhiskered fellow-guest was one of the imperial sons by extramarital relationship of the Reich Ruler withFrau Viereck, a celebrated German tragedienne of the '60's. Among the guests of theevening was Viereck's precocious son, Sylvester, now well remembered for his connection with Nazi activities and convicted on charges of sedition.

I have previously referred to my very limited musical education and its abrupt and tragic ending. Instruction

in the elementary forms of composition, the singing lessons at school and a good memory for the music ground out on the hurdy-gurdies that came to my home town, prepared me for appreciation of this art.

In the first weeks of my residence in New York, my brothers took me to Thomas' Sunday Night Symphony Concerts at Lenox Lyceum located at Madison Avenue and 58th Street. At that time the operetta "Der Vogelhandler" ("The Tyroleans") was given at the Irving Place Theater. The Nightingale Song therein, after five or six encores, was indelibly impressed on my memory at the end of the performance. My brothers with some pride asked me to sing this song for their friends, some of whom, like my auditors at my Bar Mitzvah, thought a good Chazan was being misled into a commercial career.

Grand Opera in New York had been suspended at the time, due to large deficits in the past. Musical farces in German and English held sway. Even during the summer there were performances in beer gardens, and my contemporaries will recall with much pleasure the presentations of "Der Arme Jonathan," "Girofle-Girofla," "The Daughter of the Regiment," "Der Bettelstudent" and others at Terrace Gardens, 58th Street and Third Avenue, and at Eldorado Park in the Palisades at Weehawken.

For those with simpler musical tastes, the shows at the Felsenkeller at 57th Street and East River, Central Turn Verein at 67th Street and Third Avenue, and Atlantic Garden

in the Bowery, were offered without charge of admission or even a dictated minimum of spending. The purchase of a five-cent glass of beer was your pass, and unless the waiter and bus-boy conspired against you by glances of contempt and periodical table-wiping, you had to spend no more. At a near-stage table at Atlantic Garden on a Saturday night, one could feast his eyes on the beauty of a girls' orchestra and quench one's physical thirst and hunger with two glasses of beer and a three-cent Salzstange (quantity price of "three for ten").

The Turn Vereine and Mannerchore all posed as promoters of art and literature but in reality were Sauf and Fress assemblies, and while they never appealed to me, they too, contributed in a way to my liberal education.

Among the German-Americans of that day one also met the liberals, the Carl Schurz and Steuben type and a sprinkling of the 48-ers that found in the United States, refuge and shelter from the oppressive governments of Central Europe.

Fred M. was honorary member in many of these German societies, this distinction having been conferred on him by reason of his willingness to appear as exponent of German poetry. It is through him that I mingled with these groups. In a limited measure, I too, had the Alsatians' aversion to many things typically German or rather of the "super hoch-deutsch" brand.

Even more so than Fred, a Dr. B. was the pilot in my diversified expeditions and explorations of German-American culture. He was native born, of German parents, a medical doctor like his father before him, trained in both American and German universities. He was physician to some of the leading Metropolitan Opera singers as well as to other artists and writers. He was a mixture of literary, artistic, and medical genius, a bachelor of great charm who delighted in taking us slumming in the haunts of the Bohemians. An evening starting at eight P.M. at the play, opera or concert, through the Arena (Muschenheim's Restaurant) or Luchow's at eleven P.M., a poor artist's studio at one A.M., would sometimes wind up in a Third Avenue armchair Coffee-Pot, where street car motormen had their early morning lunch. My preference in these escapades was for the evenings at the opera. Dr. B. had season passes and we who were identified with him readily enjoyed the courtesies of the management.

From Verdi, Gounod, Bizet, and Meyerbeer, I was led through the Wagnerian works by competent guides. Lillie Lehmann, Nordica, Eames, Homer, Gadsky, Calve, Melba, Trentini, Jean and Eduard de Reszke, Plancon, Emil Fischer, Van Rooy, Van Dyke, Maurel and others were the favorites in those pre-Caruso-Scotti-Farrar days.

Anton Seidl as conductor and Heinrich Conried as director, stimulated the interest in Wagnerian works. There

were revivals of "Siegfried,""Tristan and Isolde," and later "Parsifal." "Parsifal" was given in the Bayreuth fashion, starting at five P.M. with an intermission for dinner after Act One. Resumption with Act Two at nine P.M. A trumpeter's blast outside the opera house announced the opening, and no one was admitted after the curtain was up. This "infringement" on the Bayreuth style infuriated Cosima, the widow of Richard Wagner.

"Tristan and Isolde" became my favorite and I never missed a performance of it. Standing up through it, or a "Gotterdammerung" until 12:30 A.M. was no hardship for me. Like cultivating a taste for bananas, oysters, or olives, so did I refine my musical gout from the Felsenkeller-Atlantic Garden fare, through Wagner and Richard Strauss to the Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, and Schumann creations. It is a long road from the hurdy-gurdy of the "Hintergasse" in Ingwiller to Carnegie Hall in New York.

On the byways of artistic wanderings, we picked up several young art students, all poor but talented. Some of them became winners of the Prix de Rome and gained great fame in later years. Their names are now frequently mentioned as judges in art exhibitions. We are the proud owners of works by two of them,-- one, the "Fish Peddler" by Sam Weiss, now deceased, the other a girl's head by Ivan G. Olinsky, one of our present day celebrated artists. Olinsky in the struggling days of his career often engaged as a model Evelyn

Nesbit, in later years the wife of Harry K. Thaw, notorious through the White murder case.

Maurice Stern, Ivalenko, Karfunkel and other now famous names were in that group of poor young artists.

I recall with great pleasure my contact through Dr. B. with Emanuel Reicher, regisseur of modern plays. Reicher was exiled from Germany for his presentation of Hauptmann's "Die Weber" ("The Weavers"). This play shocked the reactionaries of that day the world over, was denounced as socialistic and disgraceful, agitating the masses to riotous rebellion. In New York, Reicher produced several Ibsen plays, especially "The Ghosts," "The Doll's House," and "Klein Eyolf" all sensational events shunned by "respectable society." Hedwig and Franz, the children of Emanuel, appeared in many Hollywood productions, reflecting credit on their famous father.

My close association with this mixed group of artists of many temperaments and varying stations was an unusual opportunity for one who had little to contribute besides great appreciation of their talent and sympathetic encouragement in their efforts. It gave me an insight on the uncertainty of their income and the lack of security against incapacity by illness, accident or old age. I felt by comparison quite secure with my small fixed salary. My exposure to the viewpoint of these dreamers and idealists may in a measure

have lessened the spirit of aggression that makes for material success in business, but I feel amply rewarded by the satisfactions that come from the enjoyment of man-made art and God-given beauty in Nature and Life about.

CHAPTER XX: MY RELIGIOUS LIFE IN AMERICA

The change in my religious life was not less extreme than that in all my other ways, customs and habits of living. I came to America fully prepared to loosen the fetters of rigorous orthodoxy and even to shed much of the ecclesiastical regalia, both material and spiritual, that ofttimes stifle our consciousness of being a part of a Divine Universe.

My parents understood that industrial life in New York was such that Sabbath observance would be a great handicap in the securing of employment. In the spirit that "in Rome one must do as the Romans do," they became quite reconciled to their sons' more liberal form of religion. If all else had to be abandoned, short morning and evening prayers would suffice.

They knew about the advance that Reform Judaism had made here, but to them that only meant the removal of hats in the synagogue, the introduction of organ and choir at services, and the use of German and English translations of prayers. The Festivals and Holy Days must, however, be kept.

Odd as it may seem, while I readily took the step forward in the matter of reformed ceremonies, my abandonment of the dietary laws was more gradual. It took many months before I had the courage to eat ham or pork. This can probably

be explained by the fact that the observance of the old dietary laws was not exactly an unpleasant matter. However, ham, hidden between two slices of bread in a sandwich, was easier to sin with than the odorous bacon, in spite of the fact that its flavor was not unlike that of goose-grieben. And who would ask questions about the luscious "roast veal" when one is hungry? Could I help it that it was not properly labeled "pork" on the lunch counter?

Step by step, starting with great enthusiasm, I went through the various stages of reform practice. I enjoyed the beautiful services in the Temple in Newark where I spent all of my Holy Days. I attended services from time to time at Temples Beth-El, Rodeph-Sholom, Emanuel, and others in New York. I became affiliated with the Young Folks' League of Rodeph-Sholom but could not afford the charges for membership in the congregation.

I had an unpleasant experience in one of the above-named temples on a Sunday morning when, during a young blizzard, I was among the 50 or 60 people who ventured out to attend services. An arrogant head usher insisted that non-members must take seats upstairs. This brought me to the realization of a lack of democracy in congregations, that seemed to be quite general.

My attention was called to other religious services that were likely to appeal to me. Having broken loose from

the fundamental form of religious practice, hopeful of finding a field for sincere expression in the reformed synagogues, I was disappointed to discover that while many constructive reforms had been made some years before by a long step forward, the movement stood still and was on the whole as static as its forerunners.

The Unitarian Church and the Ethical Culture Society had great appeal to many liberal Christians and Jews. I visited both and was deeply impressed with their policies of practical religion, advocating moral integrity expressed in social justice and sacrificial service.

Ethical Culture services at Carnegie Hall were well attended especially when Dr. Felix Adler or Dr. Magnaserian filled the pulpit. I met however in the Ethical Culture Society, many Jewish escapists whose Jewish inferiority complex led them to think that there was a good opportunity to make a subtle exit without appearing to be a convert. Neither founders nor their principles ever justified such an attitude.

I also frequently attended Sunday morning services at the Unitarian Church on Lenox Avenue and 121st Street. Dr. Merle St.Croix Wright, its leader, had a substantial and loyal following. Soon I was invited to round-supper-table discussions and took part in them. This was in the late '90's and the first years of the current century.

After I was married in 1902, I felt that I should have Jewish congregational affiliation. It was difficult for me to find the organization that measured up to my wishes of finding a synagogue where rich and poor could pray to their common Father in an atmosphere of equality and democracy.

My little daughter, as soon as she could talk, asked questions about God -- why are there poor children -- why Christians and Jews?

In 1907, the Free Synagogue was founded by Rabbi Stephen S. Wise. There was much criticism and many were the misstatements from his reactionary adversaries. Convinced of the honesty af purpose and impressed with the ethical principles of this Jewish congregation, I joined it wholeheartedly in 1909. I will write more about this fortunate circumstance in a later chapter. I am grateful for the opportunity that was mine to have been religiously and educationally prepared to go through an evolution of ethical development, from which I have through the years and to this hour, gained the most precious satisfaction. I must not be judged too harshly for my seeming vanity when I say that while I have little to bequeath to my children and my grandchildren, I shall leave with them the pattern of a way of life as Jew and American that will reward me richly and, I am sure, evoke from them their eternal respect and affection.

CHAPTER XXI: FIRST RETURN TRIP TO EUROPE
MY BETROTHAL

I became a citizen of the United States on January 12, 1899. The examination and award were by Justice Giegerich of the Supreme Court of the State of New York. Having arrived here before I became 17 years old, no first papers were required. The only requisition was a five-year residence in the country and the attainment of the age of twenty-one. Appearance for examination with the subsequent granting of citizenship were set one week apart.

In June of the same year, equipped with the protective passport of our State Department, I started on my first return visit to Europe. I sailed on the Hamburg-American liner "Augusta-Victoria" then one of the newest boats, on Thursday, June 15th. I benefited financially by a rate-war between the European steamship companies and secured first-cabin accommodations from New York to Paris for $58.

One of my three roommates, an English gentleman, became acquainted with the John Wanamakers who were aboard with their daughter. On the second day out, the Wanamakers organized a choir for the planned Sunday church services, and I volunteered. My singing lessons at the Gymnasium, as well as my hide-out in the belfry of the church at Ingwiller

stood me in good stead. Mr. Wanamaker in appreciation of our service, invited the choir to tea in his de luxe suite. My roommate and myself saw a great deal of the family during the remainder of the trip.

Mr. Wanamaker had been Postmaster General of the United States and on landing at Cherbourg at about nine P.M., special arrangements had been made that he and his party would be taken off the steamer to the waiting tender, ahead of the other passengers. I was one of the party. (I enter this as one of the "Mach Schabbos Davon" incidents of my life.)

The joy of this distinction was cruelly marred by what happened on the tender. Hand baggage had been piled up in a heap and I could not locate my most important valise. All baggage had been claimed by the respective owners. My steward was positive that mine had been sent down from the steamer, but no trace of it could be found. The special train for Paris was being held and the conductor gave me five minutes more leeway. Eureka! There was the odor from the overripe pineapple that was tied to the valise. We followed the scent and after much groping in the dark, we found the valise that had fallen down about three feet under a side bench on the tender.

We arrived in Paris about eight A.M. on Friday, June 23rd. I stopped at the Hotel Terminus. Paying my bill the next evening, I discovered two fictitious charges. One

was for stationery, the other for eclairage (candles). I explained that I did not order nor use either of these articles, but it was of no avail. The charges stood. I returned to the room and took along with me both items.

I left Paris after dark on Saturday and reached Deutsch-Avricourt, the frontier station, at six o'clock the next morning. All out for customs inspection and verification of passports. The gendarme at the gate was not interested in my American passport and demanded to see the exit papers issued to me by the German government before the time of my departure in 1891. I presented them. Before I reached my home town about 8:30 A.M., the local gendarme had already been advised of my entry into the country and had instructions to check on the permit that was necessary for my stay at home.

Recent application for a permit, made by my parents, had been denied. No reason for this was given, but the general assumption was that prosperous-looking young men in their twenties would arouse the envy of their contemporaries who not so long before had returned from a one- to three-year term of military service and had further obligations as members of the Landsturm or Landwehr.

These government regulations were for Alsace-Lorraine exclusively. Denial of permission meant immediate departure out of the Reichsland. Any other part of Germany was open to me under more liberal rules. This situation put quite a

damper on the joy of my visit.

On inquiry I found out that a Baron von Puttkammer was the Chief of State, ranking after the Stadthalter (Governor). I recalled that Frau von Puttkammer was a member of the Erwinia, a literary society at Strasbourg. Fred M. and I, through one Christian Schmitt, librarian at the University of Strasbourg, were American members, and from time to time contributed poetry to the monthly bulletin of the Erwinia.

Early next morning, my brother and I called on Schmitt. He promptly arranged an interview for us with Frau von Puttkammer, who received us most graciously and displayed sincere and sympathetic understanding of my dilemma. Her husband was absent in the Capital at the time but through an "Unterstaatssecretar," she arranged for my freedom of the land for a six months' period. The Secretar, by long distance telephone sent instructions to the local gendarme, who upon our arrival at home that evening, met us at the railroad station and respectfully and ceremoniously informed us of his orders, assuring us of his wish to give me special protective care. After a few hours, and some drinks, he was more the one to be protected, than the protector.

My folks were very proud, showing off their American son, the boy who had left them eight years before, to return "a man of the world." My wardrobe was shown to the natives

in the manner and with a pride that a young bride's trousseau is exhibited. They could hardly wait till Saturday to have me appear in Shul in striped trousers, cutaway and silk hat. I suffered so much on that hot July day that I swore off silk hats forever.

I was called to the Torah, and contrary to local custom to mumble through the blessings with lightning speed, I chanted them, as I had done at my Bar-Mitzvah, a matter evoking both admiration and contempt. Admiration from them who thought that this ceremony was defunct in the New World; contempt from them who disliked the unlike and would have rather heard me "schluwer" (mutter) it as they do.

A cavalcade of visitors, dressed in their best, paid its respects throughout the day.

Only those who left their parental homes at teen-age and returned eight or more years later, can fully appreciate the impressions made by the changes in the old community. Much progress had been made in these years. A railroad between Strasbourg and Metz ran through our town so that a trip to Strasbourg could be made in 35 minutes. I emphasize this here for in my pre-American days, the trip from my home town to Strasbourg was considered so long and difficult that I never had seen that city until my first return visit.

Electricity, residential telephone service, underground sewage, all had brought sensational changes in the

town that I knew eight years before.

There were some disillusions too, chiefly in the size of the buildings and dimensions of space that I had carried in my imagination. I thought our market place was the size of New York's Madison Square, and our Main Street the width of Broadway. Further disillusionment came with the serving of some of my old-time favorite dishes, -- not many, and they were outnumbered tenfold by those that still rightly deserved the oft-repeated praises of "the dishes Mother used to make."

Impressions that I had formed in days when it was not advisable to acquaint me of irregularities and scandals in the lives of some people that I had set up as idols, were despoiled by facts that could now be told to a grownup. This threw many of them off the high pedestal on which I had placed them in my youthful fantasy.

In my absence of eight years, the population of our town changed considerably. Hardly any of the young men of my age remained. Girls also had left to take positions in the cities or to marry men from other towns. The new railroad brought additional government employees and also made our town attractive to people from nearby villages and isolated hamlets. The old pillars were crumbling and many had gone to their last reward.

Irma, our only sister, was not quite ten when I

left home. While weekly correspondence, hearsay and occasional photographs had, step by step, shown her mental and physical growth, it was a delight to lay eyes on this beautiful, mature and wholesome young woman. A year's residence with a cousin at St.Die, France, together with innate tact and poise, had lifted her out of the narrow, small-town way and viewpoint to an understanding of life that made me very proud of her.

My sister of eighteen was well grown, good looking, accomplished in many of the feminine arts, had a pleasant speaking and singing voice, and above all a sense of duty and devotion to family, friends, and high causes. Everybody respected and admired her.

The question of bringing her and my parents to this country, a matter that some years before was considered inadvisable, loomed large in my mind. Our parents then were 63 and 58 years of age respectively, and the transplanting of them from the simple life they knew to that of New York, seemed risky and required sane and objective consideration. The matter was again dismissed.

Four years later, Irma married a fine young Frenchman, and with the exception of having had to witness two world wars at close range, had a very fine life. In a later chapter, I will go into more detail about this.

My sister, my brother Lucien and I made several

trips together, visiting relatives. Memorable among these was one to Frankfurt a.M. where the widow, son and daughter of our father's late uncle resided. Uncle Uhry had been cantor at the Rothschild Schule in Frankfurt. The two European branches of the family had never met. A daughter Dina Uhry Plaut, had been located by us in Meriden, Connecticut.

My parents hung on every word I spoke. What impressed my father most was the fact that we, dressed-up Americans, worked hard and long hours. He brought in and took me to a great many of his customers, and he regaled himself and them having me state my working schedule from 7:30 to 6:30 with fifteen minutes to grab a little lunch, this in a land where the dinner hour is from 12 to 2.

Mother, especially when she was alone with me, tactfully led the conversation to the subject of my relations with the fair sex. I was as frank as was consistent in that day in the relationship between an adoring mother and an average good son. In many subtle ways, she tried to stimulate me in the matter of self-appraisal as to dowries. I jokingly put a high asking price on her "perfect precious," followed, sub-rosa, by a much lower bid, -- $100,000,- no? well, - $5,000 anyhow.

Jewish people count with joy the days from the second day of Passover to Shevuoth. In the same manner, but

with understandable sorrow, parents counted the days to the one set for the departure of their visiting sons. Here again, religion serves as a comforting staff. Gratitude for God's gifts and faith that the future holds many blessings for the God-fearing.

After a stay of four weeks, I started on my return trip, stopping at Paris. I had previously picked up trinkets to bring back to my friends but had about 60 more gifts to buy. I did this in one morning at the Magasin du Louvre.

I sailed on the French Liner "La Tourraine" from Le Havre. The rate-war was still on and I paid $55 for a first-cabin room for my exclusive occupation.

I arrived in New York in early August, well rested, nigh broke, but satisfied. When I saw the collection of "Tinnoff" (junk gifts) that I hurriedly acquired in Paris, Frankfurt and Strasbourg, I lost courage in distributing them. Replacement of many of the items further weakened the toppling foundations of my financial structure. Throughout my life I have been a quick buyer, but a lucky star or some good spirit has saved me from total ruin.

So back to work with increased ambition... On to higher goals!

The marriage of my brother Moise to Rose Lazarus of Cincinnati, in the following year brought an important change in my home life. We both had lived with the Geismars,

Rose's uncle and aunt. Moise traveled quite some and we decided that I should make my home with the young couple.

We lived in what was then classed as a modern apartment at Seventh Avenue and 116th Street. The little family grew rapidly. After a few months, Rose's brother came with us; when Lucien, her first-born, arrived, we moved to larger quarters in the King's Court Apartments at Madison Avenue and 87th Street. I was very happy in my new home. Living in this atmosphere of nuptial bliss stimulated my desire for the founding of a home and family of my own.

Among the many girls of my acquaintance, none attracted me in the way that did she, who became the sharer of the life that I most wished for. She is Lillian, the little girl of barely eight who had looked for the "green horns" on me ten years before. It was on the evening of Wednesday, June 19, 1901, when I laid bare my innermost feelings, and we became secretly engaged, subject to approval of her parents which both of us rightly took for granted.

A watchful mother with a fine intuition sensed an unusual change of mood in her daughter and commented one night on the fact that we had spent three evenings together that week and that it was nearly midnight when we parted on that evening. Impulsive, honest Lillian unburdened her heart. There were tears of joy and ready evidence that my call on Papa, planned for the following evening, would not be the

harassing ordeal that most Romeos had to go through.

I was spared passing muster by aunts, uncles and cousins. During my ten years of close association with the family, I had met them all. There seemed to be almost unanimous consent, however, with one dissenter who could not understand why his sister should marry a "foreigner." This gentleman's consistency of being at the wrong end or, as Louis Mann, the actor, called it "always against," proved the perfection of this most fortunate turn of events.

There was no more secrecy to our engagement, when during the summer I made the "long trip" to East Windham in the Catskill Mountains for a weekend visit with the Hessberg family.

I could never find a good reason for secrecy in the matter of betrothals. Normally, those most concerned feel like shouting the news of their happy state from the house tops. The only explanation I can find is the feeling of uncertainty or lukewarm approval of some tyrannical dictator in the family.

In April 1902, a formal announcement was made, and the conventional engagement reception was held at the Hessberg home on the 13th of that month.

With the approach of our marriage, my ambition to establish myself in my own business rose high. While my position with my brother's firm was then one of more than

average promise, the prospect of being the "third wheel" in a small business did not satisfy me. My final decision was sped on by a change of attitude in my brother, caused by the malicious underhanded work of the above mentioned self-seeking fellow employee, also the venom from the tongue of a woman, an in-law of my brother, the mother of several daughters whose designs were upset by my own matrimonial plans.

I investigated many prospects within the scope of my small capital resources. I was sure of two things, -- that I would not become my brother's competitor, nor would I enter a very small established millinery business that had offered me a partnership;

I was short of capital but had a super-abundance of advice. The manufacture of women's hats had its advantages for one with little money and, like a dove flying into the flame, I became a partner in the millinery venture so persistently recommended to me. I invested $4000, half of which I had borrowed from my brother Moise.

Our wedding day was set for November 25, 1902. About 125 friends were invited to the ceremony and dinner at Tuxedo Hall, located at Madison Avenue and 59th Street. The Rev. Bernard C. Eherenreich and his fiancee were our intimate friends. The Rabbi did a fine job, one of the few things we ever got for nothing that was good and wore well.

A few days of honeymooning in Washington, D.C.,

and back to New York to our six-room apartment at 61 West 114th Street, and to work at my new business at 9 and 9½ Division Street, on December 1, 1902.

CHAPTER XXII: FIRST YEARS OF MARRIAGE

Our marriage union rested on a solid foundation of mutual love and understanding. Both of us fully realized the responsibilities we so willingly accepted, also the moments of anxiety and grave decision that arise more or less in everyone's life. A common viewpoint on the essentials of life, matching interests, and an innate sense of integrity made for a happy and wholesome bond.

I have emphasized the six-room apartment we chose as our first home, permitting the expansion of the family, and we were happy beyond bounds soon to discover the symptoms of a coming joyful event.

The sunshine of our happy months however, soon became dimmed by a feeling on my part of an indisposition which became quite acute while I was on a business trip in New England. I returned home one Friday evening, went to work on Saturday, had chills on Sunday, self-diagnosed my ailment as a touch of malaria, collapsed at work on Monday afternoon.

It was the eve of Rosh-Hashonah. We were expected at the Hessberg home for dinner, and I met Lillian there. I was taken home from there with 104 temperature. After the doctor's examination, I silently changed my diagnosis to

that of typhoid fever. This was confirmed at a consultation of doctors the next morning. The doctors didn't tell me, but I told them what was wrong with me.

I was too ill to be moved to a hospital, but two, and on some days, three nurses, two orderlies (men to lift me in and out of ice baths) three or four daily calls by the doctor, sick-room paraphernalia and all, transformed our home into a private hospital ward.

The doctors called it a beautiful case, everything running on schedule. The nurses were proud of their charts that looked like geographical sketches of mountains. But all is well that ends well.

Lillian's mother, the rarest of all mothers, with a divine spirit of sacrifice and devotion, had taken over the helm of the household. Her concern for our little family was such that in 1905 we decided to merge our homes, and we rented a large house at 311 West 138th Street.

Our young business managed to survive. A friend of my partner lent a helping hand. After ten weeks' absence, I was back in harness and soon after I went on an extensive selling trip through the Middle West.

Baby was expected in March. There were unexpected complications and more anxious days. The good Lord was with us again and we sailed along in calm waters, with an occasional ripple in the form of children's diseases, until our

little daughter, then five years old, contracted measles, affecting her ears, resulting in mastoiditis.

I must at this point offset these troublous accounts by telling of the many joyful incidents that accompany married life, parenthood and the founding of a home.

Our little daughter was born before midnight on the 18th of March, 1904. We named her Lucile Helene and gave her the Hebrew name of Merle, which had been that of her paternal great-grandmother Uhry. Even the unrelated were in agreement with the family that she was a beautiful baby. Grandma also said she was the best-behaved baby, and grandma knew, after being a constant attendant during the first month.

This well-earned reputation she almost ruined by her unusual behavior on the first night her grandma left us. There was apparent protest against something that was lacking in the finesse on the part of baby's new attendants. We walked and walked; we hummed and howled; all to no avail. The battle was a draw. Good sense and the futility of one little fighter opposing two giant parents resulted in complete surrender, as if by magic, on the next night.

She delighted the family, performing all the tricks of normal babies, but most remarkable was her distinct utterance of words and even sentences long before she was one year old. This, despite the fact that we had a maid with whom we had to communicate by signs.

Annie Valek had come here from Slovakia and did not speak a word of English nor any of the languages that we could make ourselves understood in. She spoke and sang in her own lingo to baby. Annie was devoted to her and all of us and beamed with joy when she could take out her little princess in the royal buggy.

Our flat was three flights up and carriage, bedding and baby had to be transported to the street twice or three times a day. All this was done without a murmur and in consideration of twelve dollars a month and good treatment.

When Annie left us after several years, her feelings hurt by the vicious gossip of a neighbor, she spoke English, cooked well, and had ambition to take piano lessons in her spare time. She kept in touch with us for a while, remembering baby's birthdays and after some years, married an American gentleman in Springfield, Massachusetts.

We did not see her or hear from her for nearly 30 years. On a Sunday in December, 1941, she surprised us by a visit at a time when my wife was very ill. Lucile answered the door bell and the "stranger" asked for Mrs. Uhry.

"Mrs. Uhry is ill; I am Mrs. Newman, her daughter." This said, Annie fell in embrace upon Lucile, exclaiming, "My baby!" Annie writes us and calls on us occasionally now. She has become a progressive, fine American woman with great executive ability.

Lucile had great imagination. At age four, she had created a fictional family of friends, the "Sines, their daughter Sylvia, their doctor Sam, Mrs. Sieble A. Cooper (Siegel-Cooper Department Store) and the Altmans" and she held telephone conversations, afternoon teas and all sorts of social functions, she impersonating all the characters. We were sure that she would grow up to write fiction or at least become a good liar, but she missed in both.

At age two, she asked "Alish" her favorite doll whether she knew her father and mother.

A strong attachment of grandparents to grandchildren is nothing unusual. A readiness on their part to be of constructive, non-interfering assistance to their young is a somewhat rarer quality, but to include even a son-in-law into the realm of their blessings and affection is a Utopian state. Added to this situation of congeniality were several practical factors that made for the advisability of the merger of the two households. Baby needed open space for play. The difficulty of baby carriage transportation could be eliminated by our occupancy of a private house with a back yard.

We rented a nine-room house at 311 West 138th Street, then a restricted district. This was in 1905 when the domestic help situation was a simple one. Apartment buildings had little to offer to compare with the comforts obtainable from a house. I will not go into the detail of layout but I must

speak of our box-stoop. Folks sat on their stoops after dinner on summer evenings. Visiting friends were received there, and it is easy to visualize how acquaintance among neighbors came about.

At this time, 40 years after, we still keep in touch with several of them. The tenancy of the neighborhood changed rapidly. Coming events had cast their shadows in more than one way.

As advocates of public school training, we entered Lucile in a school at 133rd Street near Eighth Avenue. Even our liberal attitude in the matter of racial difference did not hold when sociable, democratic Lucile, instinctively seeking out the underdog, started to bring home interracial groups of playmates, a matter frowned upon by our neighbors. This and other factors prompted us to move away from there to 1361 Madison Avenue at 95th Street, in May, 1914.

All in all, the nine years spent in the house in 138th Street were happy ones despite some sicknesses and operations affecting every member of the family, including our little son who was born there on August 6, 1913.

All is well that ends well even after a disturbed peace of mind caused by one hernia, two mastoid and tonsil operations, a second typhoid case, and a miraculous escape from a third mastoid. Minor ailments ranging from scarlet measles to whooping cough and collar bone and arm fractures,

all came and went. Is it a wonder that our son since boyhood, had definitely chosen a medical career for himself?

I am not enumerating these incidents in a spirit of complaint. I know they are the experience of many people. Nor do I enjoy as some folks do, talking about "my operations," but rather I wish to warn young people entering matrimony light-heartedly that we must be prepared to cope with these matters when they arise. All this happened to us, a family group of better than average good health. The silver linings in these clouds were in our case an intensification of a family adhesion that is of the chief essence in a happy home.

When the children were small we spent our summers either in mountain or seashore resorts. We boarded at Fleischman, Mt. Pleasant, Schoharie Mansion, High Point, (near Pt. Jervis) Roscoe, and Asbury Park. We kept house at FarRockaway and Rockaway Park for several seasons.







Hessberg family at Coney Island
in the summer of 1885

Lucile Ulbrig
age 11

Edmond Ulbrig jr
age 2

CHAPTER XXIII: FAMILY TRIP TO EUROPE

In the summer of 1911, Lillian, Lucile and I went to Europe. My family was there to meet Lillian and Lucile for the first time.

We sailed in May on the S.S. Noordam of the Holland-American Line. My brother Moise and his family had traveled on this boat several times and my brother apparently had gained the reputation of a liberal tipper. Super-service to us became almost embarrassing. On the passenger list was the name of Mynheer Van ----, manager of the line. This gentleman stayed in his suite most of the time. Noticing the special service given me, the passengers jumped at conclusions and I was taken to be he. Some of them addressed me in Dutch, and when I did not answer them, branded me a snob. Mynheer Van ---- came to my rescue, putting in an appearance in the last days of the trip.

We landed at Boulogne at sunset and arrived in Paris about two A.M., stopping at the Continental Hotel.

This was on the day of the funeral of France's first Minister of the Air, who was killed in a plane wreck a few days before. It was a day of national mourning and thousands of patriots had come to the Capital to participate in or witness the military burial and endless parades.

Lucile, then seven years old, was greatly excited over this show of military pomp. Parading soldiers all about us for several days. Lucile viewed them with the joyful excitement of a normal youngster. During a short stay a few days later with my sister's family at Champigneulles, a suburb of Nancy, we again in this fortress city saw much military life and stepped to the rhythms of military marches.

We left Champigneulles for Alsace, then German, and on leaving the railroad station at Strasbourg, then called Strassburg, a regiment of German soldiers crossed the Bahnhofplatz. We hastened our steps to see it at close range. I felt a retarding tug at my hand, followed by a whining remark from Lucile: "I'm afraid of them; let's go back."

We were puzzled by this attitude after Lucile's enthusiasm of the days just passed. To her these were different soldiers. She felt the spirit of brutality that had grown out of the rigorous training of these robots of war.

I readily understood, remembering similar fear that I had felt 25 years before in the presence of the Prussian government officials and some of my teachers. When she met my brother Lucien, then a German subject, Lucile began to brood over the possibility of Uncle Lucien having to fight against Uncle Ferdinand, who would be on the French side.

In 1911 there was little thought of war between France and Germany, and we tried to convince her of the remoteness of such state, but to no avail. She seemed to sense

the accumulating forces that led to German aggression and World War I in 1914. Her presentment in this matter was later matched by that of the English girl, a student of music in Berlin in the immediate years before 1914, as revealed in the letters to her mother and published by the mother after the girl's tragic death from pneumonia on her flight from Germany to Switzerland at the outbreak of the war.

"..... and a little child shall lead them.."

Where, oh where, is the child that will now lead this world of greed and bigotry away from the precipice of self-destruction?

We stayed at Strasbourg only long enough to make train connections for Ingwiller. At one of the intermediate stations, several crates of suckling pigs were put aboard to be sold at the Jahrmarkt (Fair) that was scheduled in my home town for the next day. My brother, the Rabbi, met us at the same point, and I was never quite sure whether hhe Rabbi or the Chaserim (hogs) interested Lucile the most.

Our hearts beat faster as we approached our destination. From the car window I saw a crowd of children waiting at the station. We concluded that grandma had assembled them to give Lucile a fitting reception. We alighted, Lucile and her mother ready to recite their well-rehearsed speeches of German greeting. Their words were drowned by the grunts of the young sucklings. We were nearly taken off our feet by the approaching avalanche of youth that however passed us,

and had come to bid welcome to our quadrupedal young traveling companions in the baggage car.

My mother was happy beyond description and loved my little family in the flesh, even beyond the degree of affection that had developed from photographs, correspondence and hearsay. Had there been any need for build-up, sister Irma at whose home we had spent a little time, had a special talent for this sort of advance presswork.

We were aware of the critical townsfolk who shyly gave us the once-over and whose approval was a matter of utmost importance to mother. We received an "A" mark.

Lucile mixed with the children of the town and while they spoke a different language, they managed to understand one another and have a great time together. Little did we dream, however, that her presence in town had started a revolt among the little women who now wanted to be dressed in their Sunday best on weekdays. One of the neighbors with two little daughters frankly stated her dilemma, and we tried our best after that to match spot for spot and tear for tear in dress and stockings. Our daughter was given the freedom of the town. Li ke her father before her, she instinctively found the best hideaways in the popular "hide-and-seek" game. In less than a week she knew the Alsatian version of "Eenie, Meenie, Minie, Mo," this being "Measel, Maesel, zei' mir's Glaesel, Wie, Wo? Grad do."

The gala day to show off the Americans was the Sabbath, the place, the Shul. The Schammes had his hands full, controlling the whispering fashion commentators in the women's section of the Synagogue.

That over, we had to sit up in state at home as the reviewers passed along.

As distances had shrunk by swifter means of transportation, some of the big-city customs had found their way to our town. Folks began to send fancy pastries, candies and flowers, each to be acknowledged by a prompt personal call. It required organization to remember the color of the sugar coating on the cake or the general character of the gift.

To escape from the strain of social dictate, we made the tour of our out-of-town relatives, climaxing in a trip to Frankfurt a.M. and Wiesbaden. The latter place pleased Lucile immensely. After our return to New York, at safe distance from the gathering war clouds she had sensed in Alsace, she would name Wiesbaden as the place she liked best of all she saw in Europe.

After spending a day or two at Selestat, my brother's home, and more time at Champigneulles, we returned to Paris together with the Champigneulles folks and "did the town" from the Bal Tabarin to the horse races at Auteuil.

One rarely saw a child on the streets of Paris in the evening. For our convenience, however, we took Lucile

with us for our evening meals. This seemed to arouse embarrassing attention. We solved the matter by going regularly to Viands' well-known restaurant where we were served in a chambre separee (private dining room). The restaurant that made the deepest impression on Lucile was the Brasserie Universelle, world-renowned for its hors d'oeuvres at fifteen cents. Her own preference, however, was for the dessert called "coup de fruits," assorted ices buried under sliced fruit and drowned in champagne.

The Parisian parks and gardens also gave her a chance to see much that was different from what we had here. We returned to New York on the S.S. Kaiser Wilhelm II, then one of the best-patronized luxury ships.

CHAPTER XXIV: LUCILE AT SCHOOL

Lucile started school in September 1911. She was then seven and a half years old. Remembering my own lack of interest in study and revolt against school discipline before my eighth year, I was not one of that type of parents who can hardly await the attainment of the legal age for their children, chiefly to get them in line for a low-age high school or college graduation, something to brag about in later years. I have written above about a change of school that became necessary after a while, and our removal from 138th Street to Madison Avenue.

She did well enough to be accepted by the Hunter College Model Training School with its strict requirements as to I.Q. rating and emotional stability. She went from there through its high school and college, graduating in 1924. She established the first three-generation Hunter family, her grandmother having been a graduate of the class of 1874, her mother, that of 1900. Her husband, Dr. Louis I. Newman, then a young rabbi in New York, delivered the invocation and benediction at the graduation ceremonies.

During the few weeks in my mother's home, Lucile became deeply impressed with the observance of orthodox Jewish ritual and custom. This, together with an innate religious spirit revealed at a very young age by questions

about God, concern for the poor, instinctive differentiation between justice and injustice, made her registration in the Free Synagogue Religious School a very great event.

At age three her chief concern, when friends brought their children to visit us was, -- what have we to give ---- to take home? At four she asked, "Why are there poor people?" Soon after she had the solution of this problem by a proposed universal merger of all possessions and an equal division among all from the big pile. At age five, we together made Sunday visits to the Hebrew Orphan Asylum at 138th Street and Amsterdam Avenue, also a Catholic children's Home on Convent Avenue, regularly carrying little gifts.

She decided, partly under the subtle guidance of her elders, to forego her fifth birthday party and apply the cost of it to a celebration for unseen guests in groups of crippled and tubercular children. When I reached home on that birthday, she met me holding out three letters acknowledging her gifts, shouting, "This is the happiest day of my life!" Birthdays came but once a year, but there were Chanukah and Purim, offering the same opportunity.

As she grew older and realized that only sacrificial giving had value, and that her savings by self-denial were all too limited to satisfy her wish for benefaction, she tried to earn some money in her spare time. This was neither practical nor approved by the family. In World War I fund-raising

campaigns, she always overpledged herself. Two friendly neighbors with "servantitis" came to the rescue and engaged her for dish washing at twenty-five cents an ablution.

Our choice of a religious school was a most fortunate one. The Free Synagogue, more than any other ethical religious training school, had a program of applied religion and social service that would nurture and stimulate her ardor for human service. I brought her to this school every Sunday and staying around, found that I too, could still learn something. At assembly on the first Sunday, stage fright overtook a little classmate who was to recite something. Dr. Wise asked for a volunteer to fill the gap. Lo and behold! there was our daughter, cool as a cucumber, reciting "Little Drops of Water, Little Grains of Sand.."

Dr. Wise asked her name and recognized it as one that was on the roster of Free Synagogue Social Service donors. This drew attention on the Uhry family and was the beginning of a very satisfying congregational life of which I will write at greater length in a later chapter.

I trust that these accounts are not interpreted as the ordinary outburst of a proud and doting parent but rather as an emphasis on the importance of studying your child and guiding it to the channels of reasonable and appropriate service. Wholesome religious teaching, your own concrete example, your sincere and honest attitude to life, will help your child to find the path of truth and righteous living.

CHAPTER XXV: THE YEARS 1912 TO 1915

The year 1912 was one of gathering clouds in our domestic firmament, following the bright and happy preceding one. My business partner, until then a dependable, energetic go-getter, developed a case of hypochondria that greatly affected the healthy growth of our business and heaped on my head an additional amount of work that even before then had taxed my strength to the utmost. It was aggravating to hear from the many specialists that he consulted, that his ailments were all imaginary. These ranged from heart trouble to measles. His attendance at business had been less than ten percent for many months.

I called him one morning to take over at the office while I waited home for our doctor whom we had called to look at our little daughter with a body rash. It was diagnosed as a case of German measles. I went to business and mentioned this to my inquiring partner. Less than an hour after, I found him in our office, head in arms, with a rash on his wrists and hands and other symptoms of the aforementioned ailment. All had disappeared before he went home.

Under the strain of daily unpredictable situations, I broke down in March. Necessity and a stubborn will overruled doctor and consultant, and I was back on the job after a week.

In May we went to Atlantic City for recuperation. There my wife complained of feeling ill. We returned home and it was a case of typhoid fever.

I struggled single handed through a busy season, dissolved partnership in November, moved my business in December from 616 to 627 Broadway, and then turned my back on the most hectic year of my life.

The clouds broke in 1913 as we looked forward with happy anticipation to an increase in the family. On August 6th, our son Edmond Jr., was born. The grandparents with Lucile had spent some weeks at Asbury Park and were to return on that day to be on hand in due time for the new arrival, awaited at the end of the month. Reaching home, they were greeted by the lusty bouncer that had beaten them to it.

This addition to the family after a lapse of eight and a half years brought a considerable change to the household with additional responsibilities accepted most eagerly by Grandma Hessberg.

Ed. Jr. was a healthy, normal baby, receiving the care and attention that would arouse the envy of royal offspring.

The year 1914 came in like a lamb. The American people were beginning to get over the economic fears that had resulted from the propaganda that was the usual weapon of

the power-controlled Republican party in a presidential election campaign. Woodrow Wilson had won the 1912 election by the breadth of a hair. Unemployment had risen; capital, frozen in pre-election months was slowly being thawed out in the beginning of 1914.

As lightning out of clear skies, so came World War I, following the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand at Saravejo on June 28, 1914, giving the excuse to the German aggressors to invade Belgium and France. The cocksure Huns were going to have their Christmas dinner in Paris. They ate dust at Compiegne, four years after.

We here felt sure of being in a position to keep out of this European struggle far away from our shores. History records otherwise, for in April 1917, we were involved. As suppliers to the warring nations, our business had prospered. Wilson, the champion of the common people, had been re-elected in 1916. The campaign slogan of the Democratic party had been "He will keep us out of war." The Kaiser and his henchmen willed it otherwise. I was then and still remain a great Wilson worshiper. History made in present days confirms his clear vision, his honest purpose, and proves his great, immortal soul. I met Wilson when he was Governor of New Jersey. I understood and admired him, facts that have given me pride and satisfaction throughout the years and to this day.

A matter that annoyed me greatly was the indelible loyalty that the great majority of German-born or German-descent Americans bore for the fatherland from which they or their ancestors had fled, to find freedom and opportunity here that was denied them there. Before our entry into the war in 1917, we had many German-American and other hyphenated societies, holding bazaars, collecting money, and using other methods to win converts to the German cause. This brought about unpleasant discussions at private social functions, and in a few instances, the breaking off of old friendships. I will never forget one dinner party at a friend's house, when in the heat of discussion, one of these "Deutschland-Uber-Alles" shouters spoke of "Wilson, der Hund." My wife became pale, felt faint, and I had to remove her from the battlefield in a state of collapse.

Another such fray was that between a Hungarian-born on the side of the Huns, and two gentlemen, one from his own land of birth, the other from Galicia, all guests at our home.

As 1917 approached, these worshipers of the Super-race became very meek. It was nauseating to me to see them then, American flag bedecked, in a hypocritical attempt to disguise their true status. These and most of the others of their stamp that I met were of my own Jewish race, and I could not even make the allowance for a possible inherited

subconscious Teutonic spirit in their case.

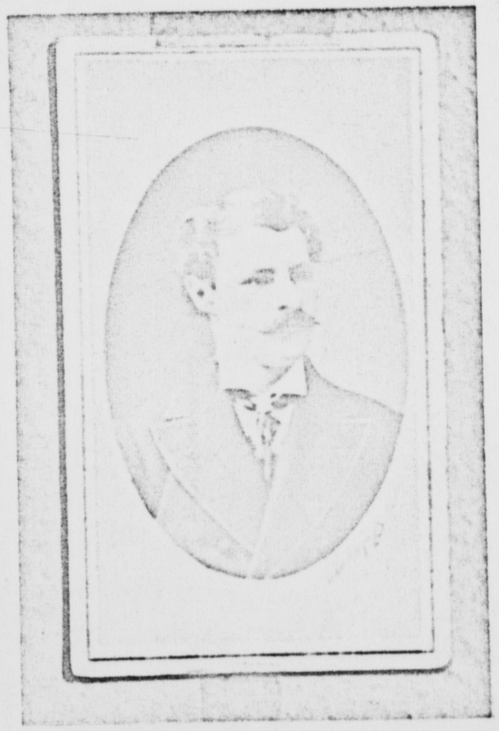
The facsimile of the Wilson haters of that day has reappeared in the form of the Roosevelt denouncers and Axis sympathisers in World War II, prior to our actual entry. Only this time, Jews were excluded.

In the summer of 1914, we kept house on Franklin Avenue in Far Rockaway. The children benefited greatly by this stay. Had it not been for the war and the fact that parts of my direct family lived on opposite sides of the scene -- my mother, brother and family in then-German Alsace, my sister's family in France -- lifewould have been tolerable. In a manner as sudden as the war, came a stroke of illness to our little son, starting with a cold one night in December affecting his ears, leading to a double-mastoid operation on December 27, 1914. Ed. Jr. was a little over 16 months old.

This illness dragged along until May 1915, and itn effect by worry made inroads on the health of the entire family. For recuperation, we rented a summer house in Rock-away Park. Before going away, we moved our city home to 1361 Madison Avenue. In January of the same year, I had moved my business to 627 Broadway. It takes the spirit of youth to cope with all that in addition to the routine of social and commercial life. We were blessed with that spirit and applied it.



Isabella Hessberg, in her 20s



Isidore Hessberg, in his 30s

CHAPTER XXVI: 1915, 1916 AND AMERICA AT WAR

Grandpa Isidore Hessberg had been suffering from diabetes for several years, but despite it, was quite active and mentally alert. He was of medium stature, thin but wiry, and masculine in appearance, wearing the heavy mustache that was the pride of the he-man of that day. He was born at Schleusingen near Suhl in Thuringia in 1845. He lost his parents at a very young age and was the oldest of three orphans, two brothers and a sister. A grandmother, Mrs. Bruell living at Lichtenfels in Bavaria, took charge of them and sent Isidore to the United States where there were Brill and Hessberg relatives in New York and Richmond, Virginia, willing to concern themselves in his behalf. He was by nature a student and while his formal schooling ended at age thirteen, he craved knowledge and educated himself to a degree that would do honor to many a college graduate. He read incessantly, attended evening classes, and was a self-taught pianist of no mean accomplishment.

With some pride he often told the story of being fired by his cousin employer of Richmond, for the reason that instead of guarding the place of business located in the basement of a hotel, he had gone once too often to the hotel parlor to practice on the piano there. The firm dealt in

leather and I imagine that in addition to a salary of two dollars a week, he received from the boss an occasional tanning of the hide. I believe he came from Richmond to New York. Here in his pursuit of learning, he attended an evening class led by Thomas Hunter who later founded Normal College, the predecessor of Hunter College. He was very proud of this association.

He subsequently married a Hunter graduate of the class of 1874. Their daughter, in 1900, and granddaughter, in 1924, as stated above, made up the first three-generation family trio of Hunter graduates.

He must have had "Wanderlust" as a young man, for I note on his discharge papers from the U.S. Army that by enlistment in 1862, he was attached to an Indiana regiment, supplementing General Sherman's forces on their march to the sea. He received a bullet wound in the leg, and while doing guard duty, shot a cow one dark night.

After the Civil War, he returned to New York and held an office position for 33 years with one of the largest cigar manufacturing firms. A chronological masterpiece testifying to loyal service to this firm, presented to him at his friendly parting to enter his own venture, rests in the family box with other treasures of sentimental value.

He had read the classics, was well versed in the world of philosophy from Plato to Schopenhauer. He could

quote from Shakespeare, Goethe and Heine and even from the Bible. I say even, for he branded himself an agnostic, a matter that I, for one, contested for I knew him to have a deep appreciation for the beauties in nature and a great sense of justice as well as respect for man, God's highest creation. He was impressed with the doctrines of Robert Ingersoll of whom many good agnostics said, "Thank God, he is an atheist."

To his very last days, he was interested in perfect English and had a voluminous vocabulary. He collected a large and worthwhile library of literature, art and music. He was an early and steady patron of grand opera as far back as the days of productions at the Thalia Theater on the Bowery, and the Academy of Music on 14th Street. He was a great admirer of Meyerbeer, but never a musical chauvinist. He appreciated Wagner, Mozart, Verdi, and heartily endorsed and subscribed to the performances of the more modern operas produced by Oscar Hammerstein. His soul was attuned to Bach, Beethoven and Brahms, but Offenbach, Suppe, Johann Strauss, Flotow and others delighted him nonetheless.

I have painted this picture of a man who is typical of the many who of necessity must enter an occupation to gain a livelihood, at the sacrifice of a career for which Nature has equipped them by the endowment of talents that

thus become twisted and warped under the stress of a prosaic vocation. Under different circumstances he might have been an artist or teacher.

He was very unhappy in his late business life, for in his middle fifties, he became associated in the children's underwear business, with a man who lacked almost entirely his understanding of integrity and fairness.

He was very happy with his family, and a picture indelible in my memory, is grandpa bending over the cradle of his grandchildren, beaming with the joy that springs from the heart of a man who in his brief youth probably hungered for the parental affection that was denied him through the loss of his own parents. Thus the Almighty recompenses those who in one way or another have been deprived of some of life's normal blessings. Grandpa Hessberg died of pneumonia on November 20, 1915 but continues to live on in our hearts unto eternity.

The European war was going badly for the Allies in 1916. The enemy had overrun Belgium and stood at the gates of Paris. The Russian front was tottering under the onslaught of the Triparte forces. The only rays of hope for the Allies were the safe delivery of supplies from America to them, and their success of the shipping blockade depriving the Germans of their necessities from overseas.

Most Americans felt that we were at safe distance.

While the large majority was on the side of the Allies, German sympathizers were rampant and a great deal of propaganda as well as a primitive form of the work that was so effectively done by the Fifth Column before World War II, was boldly operating. The Von Bernstoffs and Von Papens pulled their strings. Shrewdly planned sabotage in our heavy industries, the Black Tom explosions in the Standard Oil plants at Bayonne were carried out under our very noses, and yet we hoped to keep out of the fray and hoard our ill-gained war profits.

There was no OPA and the game of grab was on, bringing about the $20 silk shirt era and the $18 a day bricklayer age.

Wilson had kept us out of the war. His party shouted, "He WILL keep us out of the war!" I doubt that its candidate was even half sure about this. President Wilson was re-elected in 1916.

During the year there was a period of slight sobering up from the debaucherie of money making and reckless spending brought by an epidemic of infantile paralysis. This scourge reached its climax in August, at a time when families with children were crowded in summer hotels and boarding houses. These were days of strain and worry. The disease found its victims in the most isolated places, striking at those who were most cautiously guarded, as well as at the less protected in the city slums. One automatically became a fatalist and was just hoping for the best.

The slightest indisposition in a child struck terror in the hearts of all nearby.

My family stopped in a 50-room hotel at Mt. Pleasant, New York. Our son of three, after the time of his usual afternoon nap, could not be aroused. Grandma, ordinarily cool and collected, called his mother. The porch became suspicious. Whispers, hysteria, panic, a call to the doctor at nearby Phoenicia, rattling of trunks, guests packing, children herded into barn and woodshed. The doctor arrives, the boy awakes. Examination and the diagnosis is: auto-intoxication and exhaustion from excessive exercise in hilly woods, picking and eating an overdose of huckleberries.

Physicians advised folks to stay where they were. The ill wind blew a little prosperity in the path of the summer hosts.

I have spoken of my nationally and geographically divided European family. They lived within 75 miles of one another but could not communicate with each other, being on opposite sides of the war fence. As long as possible, our New York address was the clearing house for their news. My mother, who at the beginning of the war left her home to live with my brother, became seriously ill in the spring of 1916. She had for a long time held a diabetic condition, in those pre-insulin years, in check. A peaceful end came

to her early in September, on the 13th day of Elul in the year 5676. She was in her 76th year.

It would sound commonplace if I would in detail paint the picture that every good son would draw of his own mother, but I must say of her that together with a divine capacity for love, self-denial and sacrifice centered in her home and family but unstintingly spread over all humanity, she had rare vision, honesty of purpose, and a philosophy of life that God implants in the souls of His most favored children. Would that I, in some measure, could thus be appraised when the balance of my account will be struck.

As the war went on, Germany became more desparate and by threats and actual interference with our shipping, thought that she could frighten the United States out of active participation. I recall the sensational news about German submarines off our coast and one landing at Baltimore. The last straw was the sinking of the S.S. Lusitania in April 1917, when many Americans lost their lives. It was then that Congress declared war.

My age and my status as husband and father of two dependent children and head of a business exempted me from the draft but I enlisted in several of the citizens' services that were organized by the different business groups. I sold Liberty Bonds, collected funds for the various relief organizations and placed my name on the roster of men

and women versed in German and French.

Many hyphenated Americans disguised their real sympathies in one way or another, and I was more or less suspicious of everyone overtrimmed with the regalia of American patriotism, shielding a black heart underneath.

It is not my purpose to write the history of 1917-18 but only wish to record the effect that the war disease had on me. My boyhood experiences with some of the German officials and teachers made me all too ready to believe the reports of atrocities committed in Belgium that were as taps on the wrist compared to the fiendish tortures of recent days.

I regret to note that despite proof by eyewitnesses and photographs of the hellish scenes of crimes committed, we have so many among us that refuse to believe the facts, or what is just as bad, don't care as long as it does not strike home or only affects an unpopular minority like the Jews.

With our bountiful resources and great resourcefulness, our armed forces were soon on hand to stop the Huns at the Marne and turn the tide to a victorious finish in 1918.

Air communications were not yet in use nor were there ocean crossings by aviation. News did not reach us as promptly nor as accurately as now. About the end of

October, there were rumors of peace negotiations, and one morning in the first days of November, there were reports of an armistice. All of America rose in a tidal wave of joy to celebrate. The rumor was proven false within the hour, but the news was so wonderful that the crowd carried on with its tumultuous celebrations.

When in the early morning hours of November 11th, authentic news of the armistice was cabled, there was some reluctance that however soon gave way to an outburst of hilarity and jubilation. Folks rushed to the streets, partly to get news, partly to add their joy to the mountain of happy mood and feeling of good fellowship that gathered momentum like a rolling avalanche.

At seven A.M. that morning, I met a neighbor, clean shaven beyond recognition. As long as I knew him, he wore a full beard and handlebar mustaches. He could give no reason for this transformation except that he had to "do something" and did not want to get drunk so early in the day and then there was Jake, the barber, in the same boat:

I went downtown to call off some appointments I had for the day but no sooner stepped off a Fifth Avenue bus, when I found myself linked to a chain of men and women that floated endlessly up and down the avenue, shouting along with thousands of others. By noon I had gathered about me eight sailors, soldiers and other good fellows,

ashamed that I went along with the multitude, but soon I paid the penalty in my discomfort of shame and remorse when some days after, I asked a business friend who himself was among the hilarious celebrants, how he had spent the day. He broke down, and when he regained power of speech, he told me that his only son fell but one hour before the cease-firing order was given.

While the human race has not improved much, if any, since that day, I gather by hearsay, radio and press, as an observer behind the scene, that V-E and V-J Days were more sober events. Churches and synagogues were on the register of where to celebrate and they were crowded with a flowing stream of thanksgiving worshipers.

CHAPTER XXVII: POST WAR YEARS - TO 1926

We had been out of touch with our French family from the time the United States declared war on Germany. My sister's husband, Ferdinand Franck, was the type of French patriot one must see and hear to understand. He was near forty and together with two younger brothers entered the French army at the very beginning. His family were old settlers in Champigneulles, which was not a garrison city but inside of the fortifications of Nancy.

Ferdinand had a bomb-proof hideout built under his house. In it his wife, who is my sister, their little boy, his parents and several neighbors lived for months. During that time the little boy had diphtheria. As soon as all was well and complicated hazards removed, the family managed to get to the estate of a farmer friend in the interior of France. They had suffered much, but all came back alive. Ferdinand was seriously wounded in the chest and still feels ill effects resulting from this.

The Alsatian side of the family was hilariously happy at the outcome of the war and its return to French citizenship.

Over here, with the return ofour soldiers, a great wave of criticism arose, some of it justified, lots of it invented for political purposes in preparation for

the 1920 presidential election. Power politics was out to get Wilson. History records the result. Re-employment of veterans was a serious problem, poorly handled, and apple-peddling on the street corners was a sad sight, pointing an accusing finger at a calloused, ungrateful world.

The sellers' market of the duration had given way to the pressure of returned buyers' power. Strikes loomed on all sides. In my own line, a smug, self-satisfied crowd kept saying "it can't happen to us." This, despite signs of preparation on the part of labor organizations and the warnings of a few of us to put our own houses in order and voluntarily adjust unfair conditions prevailing -- to be prepared to meet with clean hands and concertedly, any attack that might be made on the industry. I was never afraid of the "terrorizing" word -- union -- but I feared and detested the comrade in trade who stopped at nothing to gain his point.

Our strike came in September 1920 and we "won" after 17 weeks, much bruised and foolishly proud. We temporarily beat the union, but in our own midst, allowed unscrupulous pirates to undermine the very foundations of our business.

In 1917, when my chief salesman entered the U.S. Navy, at a time when my bookkeeper had gone south to be with her husband who was in an army hospital, my brother

Emile paid me a visit at my office. Work had piled up to an unsurmountable heap. Emile rolled up his sleeves and in that manner naturally gravitated into my business family. This proved to be a most practical move. It solved my brother's problem on one hand and made me independent of salesmen, a class of employees with whom most of us in the line had unsatisfactory experiences. It gave me an opportunity to absent myself from New York to cover New England, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, in person. That territory in a short time supplied more than half my total business. Emile was with me until I went out of the hat business in 1925. He frequently stated that these were the happiest years of his life. This gave me great satisfaction in view of my own experiences as his employee in the seven years prior to my entry into my own business.

In the home, things ran average smoothly. The children were growing nicely, Lucile a serious young woman in her early 'teens, Edmond Jr. physically and mentally advanced, grandma Hessberg reliving in her grandchildren earlier happy years. Each of the three generations had its friends and the home was a beehive of social activity.

Lucile attended high school when Ed Jr. started Kindergarten. She was the type of student that memorizes lessons, reading aloud. Her little brother also memorized parts of them and sometimes more readily than she did, however less accurately. With him in the study of biology,

the length of the intestines of the average full-grown man varied from 26 inches to 26 miles, and the quantity of bones was in similar variance. Even at that early age he was much interested in physiology. He had seen a great deal of doctors and liked impersonating them. As time went on, he was no less interested in mechanics, chemistry, and he showed promise of becoming anything from a surgeon to a locomotive engineer. We were never sure when something would pop off in his bedroom laboratory. Fate however decreed that another Urey should discover Uranium 235.

Grimm and Andersen fairy tales became commonplace with him and I had to invent new fables to feed his imagination. Best remembered among the latter are "The Boat That Went to Toyland," "The Stowaway Dog in the Delicatessen Store" and "The Grateful Sparrow." I was the household Uncle Don of that day.

Ed Jr. got along well at school from Hunter Model through to his attainment of an M.D. At age six, he threw the faculty of his school into a state of consternation. The teacher had asked the class which flag they loved best. Chorus: "The American flag."

Ed Jr: Teacher, I love two flags -- the American flag and the Jewish flag.

Teacher: There is no Jewish flag.

Ed Jr: Yes, there is. It is a white rag with a blue border and a star in the center called the Mogen Dovid (shield of David).

At the teachers' conference, not even the Jewish teachers could corroborate his statement. The matter was confidentially investigated, the statement substantiated, and several teachers blushed.

Despite great loss of time on account of a secondary mastoid operation at age 9, he was promoted at 10 to the Speyer Junior High School. This was a school made up of boys with high IQ's chosen from many different New York schools. It was a training school for Teachers' College, an affiliate of Columbia University. Speyer students automatically graduated into Townsend Harris, a three-year high school recently discontinued after much controversy. Before his graduation from Townsend Harris and before reaching his 16th birthday, he won a Cornell scholarship, awarding him $300 annually for four years.

At Cornell, due to his age, he had difficulty in the first months to adjust himself to campus life. His bungling of fraternity membership resulting in his de-pledging from a group that did not appeal to him after closer scrutiny, was a temporary but serious interference. In the matter of fraternities, I must mention that he came from a home in which there was opposition to them. His sister belonged to one of the first college organizations that worked for their elimination from campus life. On a fairly isolated campus like Cornell's, where student community life at the

time was almost completely fraternized, it takes time to find your peers. All of this was a blessing in disguise. He found a place on the Cornell "Sun," contributed articles from time to time, and became a leader in the dramatic group. He did well in his pre-medical subjects and picked up enough of mathematics, physics and literature to stand him in good stead in his further pursuits of knowledge and culture.

He received his B.A. in 1933, then entered medical school at University of Chicago, was elected to Alpha Omega Alpha, the medical honor society, at graduation with an M.D. degree in 1937. He interned at Billings, the University of Chicago Hospital, from 1937 to 1939; served as volunteer assistant pathologist at Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York from July to December 1939; became a resident in orthopedics at the Hospital for Joint Diseases, serving from January 1939 to 1942; was awarded the Frauenthal Fellowship in Pathological Research by the hospital, then elected assistant adjunct on its staff. He entered the American Air Forces on August 12, 1943. He is now a captain stationed at Keesler Field in Mississippi.

This is a vast field of education extending from Kindergarten in 1918 to entry in the armed forces in 1943. It would however be incomplete if it were not speckled with the flowers of religious training. As Lucile's brother,

he was in conspicuous place at the Free Synagogue Religious School. Encouraged by home and family, he took Religious School seriously. The incident I like to think of is the one when his sister, then a teacher in the school, made a stirring appeal for the regular social service collection. The result was discouraging and she supplemented the attempt with further heartrending appeal, inviting additional consideration of the problem and steps forward to the platform for augmented donations. Only one pupil responded. It was her brother alone who "hit the trail." He would have come home the hard way that day had not one of his classmates lent him carfare. Lucile apparently lacked something that Billy Sunday so successfully applied.

I frequently accompanied my son to the Sunday school and stayed through the assembly. Dr. Wise would at times use an expression or refer to something that he felt was "over the heads" of the class. He would delight in calling on "Professor Uhry" to define or explain, in the hope of drawing a "boner" but he usually got a plausible answer. The time came when I had to intervene for I felt that the exaggerated title of "professor" would become a burlesquian one that might stick through life.

He remained a member of his class in absentia and graduated with it simultaneously with becoming a junior at Cornell. Dr. Wise had hoped to interest him in a theological career. His earlier religious training moved him

as a pre-medical student to take a Bible course with the well-known Professor Schmidt at Cornell and to become one of an inter-faith discussion group headed by Dr. Gilkey at the University of Chicago.

In the year 1917, when Lucile was 13, she was on the editorial staff of "The Guardian," a Free Synagogue Religious School publication. Two items in the Chanukah number entitled "The American Flag and the Jewish" and "A Review on Sholem Asch's 'America'" best portray the maturity of understanding and depth of Jewish consciousness that penetrated her being at that early age.

This matter is especially noteworthy when one considers that Lucile's maternal great-grandparents Eckstein came to America from "approved Bavaria" in 1834; that her maternal grandfather Hessberg left his native Saxony in 1857 and fought in the Union Army in the Civil War; that her father came here from Alsace, where his family resided at least since the 1750's. I emphasize this to counteract the lamentable position taken by all too many German and German-descent Jews in matters referring to the subjects treated in Lucile's articles, classifying them as alien to their particular brand of Judaism. They are cause for great pride and satisfaction to me and I insert them in this paragraph in the hope that reading them may allay the worries of some fearful pianissimo Jewish parents, whose

children, in spite of their careful watching might, Chass V'Sholem (God forbid), become exposed to situations infecting them with the fever of racial self-esteem.

The American Flag and the Jewish

By Lucile H. Uhry

Mirabile dictu! Today the American and Jewish Flags stand side by side. They seem to pledge anew our combined ideals of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. These are the bases of our republic and will be the basis of the new republic for which the blue and white stand.

What then do we owe to America and what to Zion? America has opened her arms to welcome us, a poor, persecuted race. We have come to her shores with new hopes, new ideals and have made her our home. We are sorrowful at her misfortunes, made joyful at her triumphs, and are proud of her achievements. We have fought for her ideals when they have been endangered and have stood side by side with our fellow Americans in every phase of life. But we are not alone Americans culturally, we are Americans politically and as citizens of this great republic, we vote, hold public office, and have the privilege of fighting for her, our native land. We have sunken our roots deeply into American soil, and are Americans through and through.

Yet, what should be our attitude toward the Flag of Judea? We cannot be citizens of Zion, yet we are bound to our fellow Jews there by the strongest of ties, those of race and nationality. What American Jew is not thrilled at the work accomplished by the Weizmann Commission at the building of a Jewish University in Palestine. We feel as Jews, think as Jews, act as Jews, and a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine will make us more Jewish.

There will be no conflict between our American and Jewish selves, for the highest ideals of Americanism are the highest ideals of Judaism. Our attitude toward Zion shall be idealistic, not political. Can we not love the Jewish Flag, and let our Jewish spirit help to build up American culture? America will not ask us to surrender our Jewish Nationality. By strengthening our Jewishness, we

shall help America. Zion shall be a source of inspiration to the Jews of the Diaspora, and "From Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

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"America" is a Yiddish novel by Shalom Ash, translated into English by James Fuchs. The story is told in an extremely interesting manner, the first scene being laid in a small Jewish community in Russia. Meir is a Jewish student with a wife and four children. The oldest child being a girl, she does not study the books of Jewish learning. Next come the twin boys, who prefer pulling the cat's tail to studying the Talmud. But the youngest is a child of five who can already recite long verses from this book and who shows a decided desire to learn things Jewish. But Meir finds that he cannot earn his living in Russia and is about to emigrate to America. Upon being asked if he is not afraid of becoming "goyische" like the majority of the American Jews, he replies, "Whosoever wills to be a Jew, may be one, no matter where he lives."

His life of toiling all day for little wages and studying the Talmud in the evenings in his dingy room, is indeed a hard one. He cannot accustom himself to American Jewish life. He feels that American Jewry is failing, losing its Jewishness.

After a hard struggle, he saves sufficient money to bring his family to America. Upon their arrival at Ellis Island, Jossele, the youngest child, is found to have some contagious disease of the eyes and he and his sister are sent back, back to despised Russia, and above all away from Father. Shalom Ash makes this scene on Ellis Island especially pathetic. He tries to bring out what he believes to be the cruelty of the ignorant and none too sympathetic officials. But later Jossele is cured and he and his sister again start for America. This time they are admitted and it is indeed a happy family reunited on American soil.

But as the other children go to school and become Americanized and Father is too tired to study the Talmud in the evenings, Jossele feels strange. Yes, it is his own family, but they are different, so different. Sister prefers going to the movies on Shabbas to going to the Synagogue. The twins show a certain disgust for their own people, and Father -- he is too busy earning money.

Shalom Ash presents these troublesome problems but gives us no solution. How are we to understand the Russian Jewish immigrant better and how can we Americanize him without allowing him to lose his Jewishness?

Lucile H. Uhry

Before we realized it, Lucile had grown to be a young lady. She led the sane, normal life of the sensible young woman of her age and had many friends, girls and boys. Most of the boys attended colleges in preparation for one career or another, but along came one who by age, position and personality, had an advantage over the others in cultivating favor in theeyes of the young lady. Lucile had been his pupil in the Religious School. Her qualifications as a religious school teacher, later on, ran parallel with the characteristics of the ideal rabbi's wife, a matter not overlooked by the young teacher-rabbi.

When she was only 13, Lucile made inquiries about women's rights of entering the Jewish ministry. She was assured by Dr. Wise that he would take it upon himself to overcome such hurdles that might be in the way. Before she was 18, she was engaged to the above-mentioned gentleman from Rhode Island and California, Louis I. Newman. He was at the time assistant to Rabbi Harris at Temple Israel in New York. Lucile still had two years to finish her college course. She started her senior year as Mrs. Newman





Lucile Uhry Newman, age 20

Edmond Uhry, jr., age 15.

and graduated at about the time she celebrated her first wedding anniversary. The young couple rented a furnished apartment but spent most of their time with us.

Lucile's wedding day was set for June 14, 1923. Most of the principals would have preferred a simple ceremony and dinner, but the double congregational life of the family excluded such procedure. After much consideration into which entered first the uncertain state of health of Grandma Hessberg, then the time for the trip east of the California Newman-Coffee families, and last but not least, the crowded calendars of Rabbis Stephen S. Wise and Maurice Harris, a temple wedding was decided upon. This was to be followed by an intimate dinner at the Hotel St.Regis.

An out-of-town speaking engagement of Dr. Wise at Waterbury, Connecticut, made it necessary to set the time for the ceremony at 5:30, a very inconvenient time for the reason that up to 5:59, one dresses differently from formal 6:01 attire dictated by Emily Post. After a few cursing male members of the family had the padding removed from the shoulders of their antiquated cutaways, a change in the timetable of the N.Y.N.H. & H. R.R. made it possible to set the start to 6:01 and formal dress under the rule.

Not to offend any members of Temple Israel, we asked the Board of Trustees to act as hosts to the congregation, instead of us. This also removed the possible feeling

of compulsion to these guests to follow the dictates of convention as to wedding gifts.

The Temple was beautifully decorated with the finest of flora that June provides. Leading the procession as one of the ushers was Sam Rosenman, one of the couple's intimates. In the rehearsal for this procession, Sam had his elementary training in the matter of correct marching in the aisles of the White House in later years, as friend and adviser to Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The attendance was very large and the bright June sun projected the brilliance and joy of the couple's future common life. A trip to California, with a summer course at the University of California, was their way of spending a honeymoon. Little did they dream then that the next year would bring them back there as shepherds to Congregation Emanuel at San Francisco.

In the spring of 1924, a call came to them from Temple Emanuel. They were hesitant about accepting this fine offer -- in fact, they turned it down. They had in mind the greater opportunity for service to American Jewry in a city like New York, as compared to that in the more comfortable, almost carefree Jewish group in the Golden Gate city. Dr. Wise and I prevailed on them to reconsider a few hours before the congregational officer, charged with the duties of negotiation, was scheduled to leave New York.

They accepted, and in July were on their way to their new post.

It is quite evident what changes this brought about in our home life. It was especially hard for grandma, who since 1922, had suffered from a serious heart ailment. She as well as the rest of us realized however that nothing counted in face of this wonderful opportunity.

In November of the same year, I made a business trip through Texas to California, staying in San Francisco about two weeks. Due to grandma's condition, I made this trip alone, but the family at home, in spirit, lived through every moment of my San Francisco visit.

In the few months from July to November, the young couple had made a deep impression on both Jews and Christians. This was a matter of great rejoicing to me. I was shown honor from all sides and there loomed in my mind the idea of a possible transplanting of the eastern portion of the family to the pleasant climate of the Pacific coast. I saw business possibilities there at a time when the never excessive ardor for my own line was in rapid cooling process. On my return trip, I visited Fresno, the home of the Newman-Coffees, and also spent a week at Los Angeles.

My itinerary called for stops at Denver and Chicago on the way home. A side trip from Denver took me to Silver Plume, Colorado.

Silver Plume is a mining town about 60 miles from Denver and then had a population of about fifty, housed in wooden shacks. It is at an elevation of about 11000 feet and reached by a single-tracked, narrow gauge steam railroad from Denver. My interest in Silver Plume rested on an investment of several thousand dollars that I, together with some friends, had made in some mining properties. I had met a Mr. F.W., the manager, in New York, and after hearing him describe the wonder and wealth of our properties, it would have been sinful to pass up this opportunity of viewing the rich bounty that Nature was holding for us.

It took four hours for the puffing locomotive to pull us through icy ravines and overhanging trestles to our destination. My host, Mr. W.,and his son met me at the terminal and were very solicitous about my reaction to the high altitude and the fourteen-below-zero temperature. After taking a few steps, I understood their concern, for I felt pulses in a dozen places. I was glad when we reached Mr. W.'s home and got close to the red-hot coal stove of which there were six in the five-room bungalow.

For my special benefit, several of the foremen supervising the work in the mines and mill came in after supper to discuss the day's progress with the boss and to talk at me for relay to the Eastern stockholders. Arrangements were made for my tour of inspection in the morning.

For the night, my host took me to the stationmaster's house, the best in town. My room there was on the street level. Attention was called to the not-unfriendly snooping around and scratching at shutters by lonesome, "harmless" animals, such as wild cats. Howling sounds from mountain lions, seemingly close, were from ten to fifteen miles off and "nothing to worry about."

I lay awake all through that arctic night, and the most welcome sound was that of footsteps overhead in the morning. They were the stationmaster's, who rose early to supervise the departure of the one-and-only daily seven A.M. train to Denver.

It took courage to get up out of bed. Mr. W. called for me to get an early start for the day's rounds. After breakfast, the question of what the welldressed man wears when he visits his Silver Queen, was uppermost. Fortunately, Mr. W. was a much bigger man than I, so that over all that I wore, we could place layers of clothing in duplicate and triplicate. With an added 30 or 40 pounds to my weight, the 1100 foot climb to the mouth of the mine was a precarious matter. When I asked Mr. W. what he would do if I gave out, he answered, "Same as I do with most of them -- carry them up." I made the grade on my own.

We entered the first shaft and rode on the miniature train to where some men were at work. The walls of

the shaft were criss-crossed with veins of lead and silver. All that the enthusiastic promoters claimed, when they invited our investment, was there. The question was to mine it, mill it, transport it, smelt it, and have something left over. I wanted to make sure that I would be around when we divide the "kitty," therefore I refused to cross some of the deep crevices on narrow planks, with a rope on one side serving as a banister. I refused to risk my neck descending several ladders to a level where recently a large vein had been discovered. My host was sure that this was one of the outrunners of the celebrated No. 6 vein that had yielded over forty millions to the owners of the adjoining property. One needs be a patient optimist to endure the drabness, risk and uncertainty that accompany the life of a miner. I was happy when I saw daylight again.

Our separation mill was on a mountain opposite, about one mile off, measured by airline. An aerial tram connected it with the main dump at the opening of the mine; I was told that it would be the easiest way to get to the mill. I watched a load of ore being trammed, and decided that I would walk. I was warned about the hazards of climbing and sliding over frozen waterfalls and going along narrow ledges. Above us, gigantic icicles from overhanging rocks; below, yawning gulches of rock and ice. On one of the ledges, about four feet wide, we came face to face with

a donkey hauling lumber used for shoring the walls of the mines. This jackass seemed to know enough to discover in me the tenderfoot from the East. This, in spite of my disguise in local attire and haberdashery. For my special benefit, he placed himself diagonally across the ledge, blocking all traffic. When he suddenly started to go, he nearly pushed me over the ledge with the lumber that was strapped to his side.

Special preparations had been made to operate the mill for my benefit. The capacity of the mill was inadequate for even a fraction of the possible production of our mines, and several hundred thousands of dollars would be required to remove this bottleneck. It seems to me there is always something in the way of additional construction or acquisition of property that consumes any accumulation of surplus earnings.

This was in 1924. I know that operations have continued. My last reports show that a large mill has been added, that more land has been bought, that granite quarries have been operating, that electric power-stations have been built, that even oil was struck -- but no dividends have been declared. One advantage I have over most of our Eastern stockholders is the experience of this exciting trip to the graveyard of our hard-earned funds.

On my return home, I had to be cautious in my description of what I had seen lest they back any enthusiasm

on my part with additional investment. I could testify to the legitimate expenditure in development, to the presence of much ore, to the smelter yield per ton of ore mined at that time. I also pointed out the possibility of unforeseen mishaps that could undo at one stroke all that had been planned and built over the years. I concluded my description by saying that millions in annual business are at Herald Square in New York; Macy's knows how to "shovel them in," Henry Siegel did not.

A rich and memorable experience was my return trip to Denver. To fit my schedule, I had to leave Denver that night; the seven A.M. train I spoke of was the only one out of Silver Plume. My host decided to take me in his auto. The car had been put up for some weeks and the oil was frozen in its joints. It was necessary to bring a heavy truck from nearby Georgetown to tow us until the parts of our vehicle were libered up. We were on our own for only a short time when our headlights went out, leaving us in the dark, on a lonely mountain dirtroad. We managed to get dim lighting restored and were going over one of the several mountains where there was no human habitation for a stretch of about 25 miles. I inquired about an incased implement that hung across the car and was told that it was a shotgun in case --- "In case of what?" I asked. My host explained that if we should become stalled in a snowdrift, one of us would take

the shovel, and the other, the gun to salute any of the snooping natives that had serenaded me the night before. I concentrated on the shovel. Few sights ever made me feel better than did the lights of the city of Denver on that dark, cold night.

To be sure that I would start East full of the wild-life spirit of the Rocky Mountains, my host took me to a restaurant specializing in the local fauna -- bear, boar, and bighorn. Applying the Golden Rule "Do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you," I ordered ham and eggs. A pullman berth never looked better to me than the one I climbed into on that night to be on my way to Chicago and thence to New York.

I brought back from San Francisco the exciting news of a blissful event to happen in May. Grandma's attacks recurred so frequently in the early part of the year that we had nurses in attendance almost continuously. We rarely left the house, but on the evening of Decoration Day, we went to the movies. When we came home about 9:30, we were told by the nurse that Rabbi Wise had phoned congratulate us on becoming the grandparents of a California native son. Western Union admitted that an undelivered telegram was at their office since 5 P.M. We called San Francisco and had the first of two lengthy phone conversations, a sensational matter in those days. It was $37 worth of "gush"

with the new father and all the in-laws assembled but it was worth it. Another notch in the record of thrilling experiences, the one of becoming grandparents.

The uppermost wish of the family was to have great-grandma see the baby. It seems that the hope of the fulfillment of that wish did more than anything else in keeping grandma going. Early in October, it materialized. If I had the gift, I would like to paint the picture of great-grandma holding baby Jeremy in her arms at the dreaded hour of departure.

In 1925, grandma's condition had become such that we wanted to be at ready call day and night. Attacks occurred without warning and compelled immediate first aid and prompt attention from doctors and nurses. As in a fire drill, each member of the family, including 12-year old Ed Jr. knew his station and task in concerted action to save seconds in the preparation of speedy relief. We were fortunate in the devotion of Dr. Neff, our family physician, and the ready co-operation of Dr. Reisman, a neighbor.

On Thanksgiving afternoon, November 25, 1925, this good woman took her customary afternoon nap and went to her just reward without again awakening. She lives on in many loving hearts and now dwells in the great company of those who, by their love of mankind and service to God, have earned their place in the land of immortality.

In the early days of 1925, I decided to leave the millinery business. I have said before that I never liked it. It was a line sensitive to many influences. A new play or book; a notorious person; a danseuse in Paris; the visit of a maharajah in London could change the vogue from one day to another. Then there was the uncertainty of weather. These risks had to be considered in the calculation and pricing of our article. Some of us made financial headway in spite of these odds.

There came the introduction of new methods in retail merchandising, a tendency to concentrate purchasing power, the chain store and the leased department that brought with them abuses that were especially hard for the honest merchant to bear. Mass production was advocated; carrying stock for spot delivery, were the order of the day. Purchasing power, squeezing profit on the one hand, compelling the manufacturer to take additional risks of stocking merchandise on the other, can only bring ruin. The next years proved this, for more than half of the firms existing in 1925,had failed or liquidated in the next decade.

I spoke of abuses as they affect the honest merchant. His capital, honor and reputation are serious matters to him. The unscrupulous, who have little or none of these invested, become ruthless in the conduct of their affairs, steal your style, your help -- but their ship of piracy usually founders on the rocks of ill-gain.

I called about that time on my ex-partner, A.N.A., to wish him luck in a building construction venture that he had just entered. A. was among the few who up to that time had operated very successfully under the new conditions. I spoke of my intention to retire from the line. He made me an offer to come in with him, to release him for additional building construction. The offer was sincere and the reasons for it consistent. An income by salary, casually mentioned, with a profit-sharing interest, was placed by him above $30,000 a year. It was hard to resist, and I accepted the offer as of May 1st.

A subsidiary of his business, established to take care of a close relative who was a disrupting element, was to be liquidated. Between January and April, things happened that brought about a change of mind, to the end that I was to take over the management of that subsidiary for trial continuation for one year. It was evident that family pressure had been operating and the planned elimination of the relative was not as simple as it had looked at first.

My own business at that time was nearly wound up, and I made the best of a situation that did not appeal to me, and that I could not have become involved in two months before. A proposition entailing a very large salary and 45 per cent interest in profits, without risk of capital investment, was difficult to turn down.

The gross sales of this business had been approximately three-quarters of a million the preceding year, showing a paper profit of a few thousand dollars which could have been written off tenfold in a perfectly legitimate way. A move in July of that year to temporary quarters, necessitated the sale of the greater part of the installations to a successor tenant at one dollar, as an inducement for him to take over a lease that had to be disposed of. This reduced the fixture and machinery account carried at $18,000 to about one-third of its prior book value.

Despite its many ailments, the business by October 1st was brought to a sound state, showing a small surplus in operation. Everybody was enthusiastic except I, for by that time, I had discovered the hidden germs that had undermined to a hopeless condition this partly restored commercial body.

The expense of a second removal several months after, swallowed up most of the profits that had been made so far. A., together with six or seven friends, was erecting 65 West 39th Street, a 22-story millinery building, and we were of course to be tenants. Our business, already saddled with thousands of dollars worth of wasteful overhead, assumed a $14,000 annual rent account and spent $11,000 in new installations.

"Now for a million-dollar annual turnover" was

the dictatorial edict from the top.

I repeat, I had no investment in the venture beyond my time and health. My contention was that we had neither working capital nor organization nor space enough, and most important of all, in me, not a manager who was willing to lead in such a reckless venture. A modest profit made in the same and honest conduct of business appealed to me but not the idle glory and noise of a "million dollar wild race." A business depending on fickle style, supersensitive to all other conditions that affect general trade, should be kept within limits. That was my contention. I was branded a coward, a piker, and they would "show me." They showed me so much that when I called on my doctor, he was shocked after his examination, and his advice to me was as follows: "I don't know what your work is, but whatever it is, give it up"!

I took my doctor's advice and gave notice to my associate. He was willing to give me absolute power to organize things in my way, to weed out parasites, to give the corporation the name of the firm that we were 15 years before, a name that still retained the respect and confidence of the trade. In the very final conferences, human nature relapsed to true form and I foresaw the same sort of nerve-wracking interference in the offing. I stuck to my decision and got out to regain my undermined health.

A vacation in San Francisco was the matter of first importance. A few days prior to the start of my trip I met a young man, Leo G., of whom I always had thought well and whose strength was that of selling. In an extended lunch period, I decided that I would start a hat manufacturing business, specializing in certain lines that we were both identified with. He was to be the sales manager and to assist me all around. A salary of $150 a week plus a 15 per cent interest in net profit was to be his financial arrangement. I had a skeleton staff of the essential help at my beck and call.

A very pleasant three-week vacation in California seemed to have done wonders. I returned full of pep and enthusiasm, and on the morning after my arrival home, we started in temporary quarters with machinery and tools lent to me by friendly competitors. The matter of renting permanent quarters and the details of starting a business from scratch, as I had done 24 years before, were not as easy as I had thought. My self-confidence ebbed from day to day. Doubt, fear, regret, alternating with the resolve to go ahead, to keep faith with trusting employees. Responsibility for a two-and-a-half year lease at $6000 a year, and return of the old dislike for the line brought things to a pass where I did not sleep nor eat, but worry and brood.

The summer of 1926 was the first opportunity for

a visit of my wife to the family in San Francisco. She left New York with our son, feeling that all was well with me. It can be easily seen what a fine atmosphere for brooding a nine-room apartment can be for a lonesome lover of home and family. My brother Moise, whose family had gone to Europe, sensing my spirit of depression, spent nearly every evening with me.

Leo G. came to me when I was sitting in a pondering mood in my office. He opened his conversation saying, "Mr. Uhry, I'm gonna talk myself out of the best job I ever had, and I have no other one to go to. You must not go on with this venture!" I was annoyed for a moment and remarked that a week at Atlantic City would mend all. He went out under some pretext.

My brother soon after called me on the phone and asked me to meet him at lunch. There I heard that Leo had called on him and he suggested that I stop there and then. On an automobile ride through Westchester he told me in due time that he had taken it upon himself to instruct Leo to give notice to the heads of the force of my employees. He saw to it that I did not return to my place of business that day, nor to my apartment. After a night at his home, at the breakfast table, I promised to abide.

On arrival at my office, an understanding group of employees met me. I offered to pay their salaries until such time that they would be re-employed. In less than two

weeks, everyone had found another place. All except Leo. Positions like his were held under contract and this was July, not a time for expirations. Leo assisted me in closing out merchandise, equipment and renting the loft. He subsequently made a connection at a much lower salary and on my offer to cover the difference, he suggested my payment of a bulk sum of $1000, which I readily paid him.

My first sub-tenant in July paid rent for one month, $500, but in September, sent the keys to my house. He had gone to Europe and under the law I could not even enter the premises without bringing dispossess proceedings. In February, I secured a new tenant, paying a rental of $4000, an annual loss of $2000. After some months more annoyances developed resulting from the condemnation by the building department of wooden partitions. This violation had existed, unknown to me, prior to my own tenancy. These fixtures were in part a consideration in my taking over the lease and were sold to me at one dollar. I had given the same inducement to my sub-tenant. My predecessor, the responsible party, refused to cover or even participate in the expense of replacement by approved fixtures. Thus my one-dollar bargain cost me $650.

The violation had been pigeonholed in one of the city departments for such tenants that were willing to engage, at $150 a year, the services of a company headed by a

retired New York City fire chief, consisting of the supervision of fire drills.

I give all these boring details in the hope that someone, in some way, will profit by my experience. At the purchase of a building a search is made for pending violations; at the acceptance of title to an installation of fixtures, even at the price of one dollar, the same precaution should be taken, or at least guarantees be given by the seller.

To those who don't believe that it is harder to hold money than to make it, I want to say that this "conservative" venture of only a few weeks' duration cost me about $11,000 --- and I'm not exactly a Schlemiel.

Realizing in July that in my frame of mind I would continue to make mistakes, all were agreed that an extended stay in California with my family was the consistent next step. So on to the Golden West, where rest and the bright sunshine would sweep away the cobwebs spun by the spiders in the dusty corners of my business surroundings in the year 1925-26.

CHAPTER XXVIII: BACK TO CALIFORNIA JULY - SEPTEMBER G. HIRSCH SONS' AFFILIATION

I recuperated very rapidly in the circle of my family in whose center stood its youngest member, Jeremy, then about 14 months old. He and I were not strangers for this was our third meeting in his young life. I believe we understood one another from the very start and I am very happy to say, despite the 51 years of age difference, we are in honest agreement on most essentials of life at this time. In a later chapter I will dwell at greater length on this happy state.

For me, one who had never become accustomed to New York summers, San Francisco was a tonic. Sunshine every day, with moderate temperature, dropping with the entry of a cool mist in late afternoon frequently to a degree that called for heated rooms and fur coats in August.

The Newmans, during their two years of residence, had made many friends, and San Francisco hospitality was showered upon us from all sides. The Newman-Coffees from Fresno had come to San Francisco for the summer to escape the San Joaquin Valley heat. We rapidly made many friends, and some of the businessmen saw favorable prospects for me for permanent establishment in their city.

My mistakes in the preceding months made me cautious. I also felt that the separation from a field of activities extending over a period of 35 years would not be a simple matter. After all, while I did not amass a fortune, I had at least gathered a wealth of good will and the confidence of many friends. I was not yet ready to slip into the easy state of "little work and much play." It was pleasant in the period of recuperation to take advantage of what country and city clubs offered in the land of guaranteed sunshine and well organized play.

In my early youth, I used to eat my candy on the spot, while my brother nibbled at his for hours and even days. Now I was more conservative in the consumption of offered treats. I wanted to keep some offered thrills open for a later trip. This partly explains why so much of what the Cook's Tours traveler saw on the Pacific Coast has to this day remained unexplored territory for me. I regret I never saw Del Monte, Monterey, Santa Barbara, Yosemite Park and none of the famous spots in Oregon, Washington and the Canadian Rockies. I remember with great pleasure my stays at Los Angeles, San Diego, Pasadena and Fresno in southern California, and day trips to Mt. Tamalpei, Berkeley, Palo Alto, San Mateo in the San Francisco district.

A memorable incident was an automobile trip to Lake Tahoe. Dr. and Mrs. Harry Spiro of San Francisco,

Mrs. Anna Newman Coffee of Fresno, my wife and I, made up the party. We left San Francisco on a boat in the evening, bringing us to Sacramento the next morning. As we drove deeper into the Sierra Nevadas, we struck roads that had been built long before automobile travel. After taking in much breath-taking scenery, following breath-holding moments in the manipulation of the car by competent Dr. Spiro, we reached Cisco in midday and stopped for food and rest. We drove through mountain passes made historic in the pioneering days of the covered wagon caravans. There yonder, the spot where the Donner party met its tragic end in the winter of 1846-47; everywhere, landmarks of events bespeaking the courage and endurance of man resolved to reach the goal of a dream. Much was legend built by exaggeration and overdramatization, but most of it was realistic and true of the experiences of the men and women seeking the goal beyond the horizon.

We were glad when we reached Truckee, the central city of Lake Tahoe life. Our reservations were at Brockman's Hotel on the Nevada side of the lake. A day trip around the lake is first "must" among the things to be done there. The most impressive sight is the sky's reflection on the water, a panorama changing with every shift in the pattern of a typical California sky. (Let's give half the credit for the sky to your neighbor, Nevada, vain Miss California.)

Our stay there was all too short, doubly realized by us when we reached our next stopping place. On our way to Calavera's Big Trees we had chosen Markleeville as a stopover and had reservations for three rooms with baths at its best and only hotel.

Markleeville, the seat of Alpine County, then had a population of 56. Alpine County became famous in the presidential election of 1916, when the outcome hinged on the California vote. America retired that election night in the belief that Charles Evans Hughes had defeated Woodrow Wilson. Delayed returns from isolated Apline County swayed the result, so that America awoke on the morning after, to find that Woodrow Wilson had been re-elected. This news brought with it for many Republicans the proverbial headache of the "morning after."

The hotel at Markleeville was the typical inn of the early Wild West movies. The registry lay on the bar. Brass rails and high and wide cuspidors had been carefully polished for our arrival. The regular boarders, booted to the hips, wearing ten-gallon hats, tired from their day's work in the mines, sat around chewing, spitting, wondering why we had come there.

The fact that there was confusion in the announced time of our arrival caused no inconvenience in the assignment of rooms. We mounted some steep stairs, led by the

proprietor. At the head of the stairs there was a shelf with about 40 candlesticks each holding the stump of a tallow taper. We were asked to help ourselves to one for each team and to pick any of the 25 or more vacant rooms along an endless hallway (follow the line to the baths -- blue for the boys, pink for the girls.) "Everybody's honest around here; no locks, no keys, no springs."

In the few minutes since our arrival, we had found out that the owner was coroner, undertaker and surrogate. We were tired and trusting. We were agreeably surprised by the fine supper that was served to us. Our hostess was so extremely friendly and solicitous, that in the middle of this fine meal, we became suspicious. But we were hungry and reckless.

After supper, we joined the assembled fellow-guests in the barroom-lobby, and were impressed by much that we heard, especially about recent automobile accidents that happened along the mountain trail that we were to take the next day. We did not sleep much that night, but whiled away the hours, holding room to room conversation between us through the wooden walls.

Roosters began crowing, cows started mooing, bacon and coffee aroma penetrating, then the sound of the breakfast bell. Again a surprise in a substantial morning meal, fit to satisfy a killer's last wish before his execution. Fruit, bacon and eggs, steak, french fried, pie with cheese,

griddle cakes and bushels of coffee.

We almost hated to leave such cordial hospitality. Now the bill: five dinners, five lodgings, five breakfasts -- $12.50, but if Dr. and Mrs. Spiro used only one of the twin beds in their room, it's only $12. "You see, we have to haul most things from Carson City, that's why we have to charge so much. Have a cigar on me, gents!"

We received last minute instructions about the road and were told of the spots where things had happened, some by landslide, some by misjudgement on the part of "those city drivers." We thought that many places fitted the description of "fatal scenes," but we had not seen the several autos that were supposed to lie at the bottom of the embankments. We met up with them, however, in due time and also with a traveler going in the opposite direction. At first we took some comfort out of the thought that we were not the only fools, and you know misery likes company. When we, as passengers, overheard the plans of maneuvre necessary for the cars to pass one another, we wanted to get out, but in our spell for adventure, we trusted the Lord and Dr. Spiro again. Twenty percent grades, hairpin curves with only two to three feet leeway to 500-foot drops.

We reached an altitude of about 13,000 feet. All of us felt the effects of this and one had nose-bleed. I felt a thousand pulses. We reached Calavera's Big Trees in

the early afternoon. The hotel there, catering to summer guests, had fairly comfortable equipment and looked good to us.

Within short walking distance from the hotel is a grove with some of the largest and oldest sequoias (big trees) in existence. There was the stump of one with a tunnel big enough for a team of horses and wagon to pass through. We left the next morning, drove through Angels' Camp and the Bret Harte country via Stockton, back to San Francisco. I love to day-dream about this trip and re-live its rich and odd experiences.

In August of that year, Ed. Jr. reached his Jewish majority, and on very short notice, was being prepared for the customary ritual of Bar Mitzvah. He was well accustomed to public appearance at synagogue altars and in his recitations acquitted himself in the manner befitting a deacon's son and a rabbi's brother-in-law.

The material celebration took the form of a mid-day dinner at the famous Tait's. The matter had little advance notice but nevertheless turned into quite a "package party" over the weekend.

Visits at Leland-Stamford, also at University of California, the attendance of open-air performances in the Greek Theater on the Berkeley campus, visits to the former Newman summer home adjoining the Herbert Hoover residence at Palo Alto, days spent at luxurious Beresford

Country Club, are only a few incidents in the whirl of social life in which we were caught -- I admit, without much resistance on our part. All very pleasant and sweet as the richest dessert, but life and activities in the East beckoned. Its taxing substance had greater appeal for us than the softening ease and comfort of that of our peers on the West coast.

We arranged for our homeward trip to weigh by comparison the special merits of each of these different forms of life. We routed our trip by way of Los Angeles on the A.T. & St.Fe R.R. to Chicago, with a stopover at Grand Canyon.

Los Angeles differs climatically as well as socially very much from San Francisco. Superior climate, more rapid growth, its lure to the mid-Western middleman by reason of offer of greater living comfort at lower cost, have implanted in the hearts of the pioneer rooted Northern Californian, a jealousy and spirit of rivalry that has become almost proverbial. Only the development of Florida has mitigated this unfriendly attitude by the sharing of their contempt for their mutual new rival. Sightseeing in Los Angeles is so well organized that in two or three days, one covers Long Beach, Santa Monica, Venice, Beverly Hills, Hollywood, Pasadena and the Mt. Wilson Observatory.

We were glad to get on the train for the East,

and after a good sleep, find our car sidetracked at the Grand Canyon in the morning. About 60 fellow passengers joined in this one-day stopover, and there was an immediate rush for the Hotel El Tovar, there to arrange for as many sightseeing tours as were possible before the time for departure at ten P.M.

I will limit my description of this awe-inspiring miracle work of Nature and only say that it must be seen and felt to be understood. In my humble judgement, not even the miracles of recent days, discovered and invented by human ingenuity, can surpass this wonder work of the ages by the hand of God and the tools of Nature's giant elements.

We arrived in New York on Labor Day, ready to take up the life we were accustomed to, and I was anxious to find out where and how I would connect myself commercially. My trip had the desired effect, and while I was not quite sure where I was going, I knew the roads and ruts and pitfalls where I must not stumble again. This was not an easy matter, for no sooner was I discovered back, there were propositions. Some of these attractions offered admittance, almost free. "It costs nothing to come in, but beware of the going out."

I placed ads and followed advertised offers of many things ranging in character from the manufacture of straw hats for horses to operating gold mines in Canada.

The going-down-town habit was such that I had no

patience at home on business days, and good company at a lunch table was a pleasant event. I preferably sought the company of Adolf Hirsch, the friend of many days. I had met him and his brother Angelo at lunch at Schleifer's Restaurant on 36th Street quite regularly for several years. Angelo at this time was in Europe. I discussed many of the prospects with Adolf. One day, out of a clear sky, he made the surprise offer of my entering in the employ of his firm, G. Hirsch Sons, 417 Fifth Avenue.

I knew the firm since 1891 at Grand Street; had chummed with Adolf when we were business neighbors in West Houston Street in 1896; bought goods from the firm when it was located at 653 Broadway, later at Broadway at 19th Street, and still later at 417 Fifth Avenue. This gave me frequent opportunity to visit it. I always wondered how it was possible for anyone to know the myriads of items that it carried. It was all so foreign to me that I could not see where I fitted in legitimately. Adolf saw better. He felt that a mature man of my experience could do much to relieve the heads of the business. He felt there was a need for a personnel man coming from outside into a business family with a great many veterans, hard to discipline.

After two days of deliberation, I proposed the following: that I come in and see where I could be of sufficient use to earn a decent salary; that no salary was to be paid until such time that I think that I am earning one,

and at such time that we would both agree that my employment seemed mutually desirable.

The following Monday morning, I reported for work, semi-incognito. The receptionist took my name, address, etc., and told me the rules and regulations governing shipping-room employees. He took me to Mr. W., whom I was to assist in a general way. "Mr. Uhry" did not sound well in the shipping-room quarters, and for "Ed" I was too old, so the vocative became "hey, you." For identification, I was called "the new guy." My disguise was discovered after a week when some fellow employees saw me with Adolf coming out of a restaurant. After another week of justified suspicion and cautious conduct in the presence of "a planted spy," I promoted myself to the stock and order section. Suspicion slowly receded.

After the third week, by virtue of transfer of a man to our Chicago office, I took over his calling list which was chiefly made up of firms manufacturing women's hats and artificial flowers. Our lines were 90 per cent for use in the Fall, and this was the middle of October, with only a few weeks left before the start of the wholesale Spring season. In the short time, I began to realize the possibilities for promotion of much of the merchandise on hand by simple manipulation and slight change in construction. Out of a staple line of furniture galoons, we designed Jacquard ribbons and bandings having the appearance of

expensive hand embroidery. We had no trouble to sell all that we could turn out on the machines at our disposal at Lyon and later on also at Nuremberg.

In October the firm broke our no-salary arrangement by insisting that I accept a nominal monthly pay to which a substantial bonus was added at the end of the year. By that time, both sides felt that we would go ahead, and the mutual confidence established was such that no detail discussion of remuneration was necessary. Until 1932 my earnings ran between $8000 and $10500 yearly. My main work was the development of a millinery supply department.

From the very beginning, I was made to feel that with few exceptions, all matters ordinarily held confidential with the principals, were as an open book to me. I was, strictly speaking, "hired help" but I was treated as one of their own associates. This made me very happy and I put in every ounce of energy that can emanate from the ambition and loyalty of a contented man in the prime of life.

I enjoyed my work, was among the first to arrive in the morning, and the last to leave at night. My manner and mien reflected my happy frame of mind. I was the envy of some of my former competitors who labored under the strain of changing conditions and demoralizing evils that were creeping into our old line. I became father confessor to many an honest, worried brother-in-trade, who was from

day to day sinking deeper into the quicksands of abuses resulting from concentrated buying power.

Not even the crash of 1929, while it diminished inventory values of my investments, greatly disturbed my happy mood. The year 1932 was rather the beginning of my depression. All business was poor. Added to the many ruinous elements that had ravaged the millinery business was an extreme change of style reflecting the upset psychology of consumer and creator alike. Business in 1931 was still good enough to warrant a trip to Europe. I made it a sort of business-vacation trip to France and Switzerland.

With my best judgement based on trend indicated in the several avenues of style origination, I bought a conservative amount of millinery merchandise from French, Swiss, Italian, German and Czecho-Slovakian manufacturers. Ostrich feathers, as a hat trimming, were as dead as Empress Eugenie, the wife of Napoleon III. There was no sign of resurrection of either one when I boarded the ship for my return trip. The ghost of the Empress must have passed us on the way. Before I had regained my land legs, fashion reporters called on me to find out what all that talk about the "rebirth of the Empress Eugenie togged out in ostrich-plumed millinery" amounted to. All I could say was that I never cared much for queens, except Queen Esther of the

Bible and the queen of spades for a meld in pinochle, and therefore was not familiar with the escapades of Her Majesty. A typical millinery upset and I had to be mixed up with something as fickle and inconsistent as Madame La Mode. My wrong importations dribbled away over the next decade and made their farewell bow out of our stock at the start of World War II.

The episode would not be worth mentioning if the experience had not prejudiced me still more against everything that had to do with the millinery industry.

The firm was quite willing to take the risk of other experiments but I was the detracting influence. Many other lines we developed for other industries could be applied in a limited way to my specialty. We found ways of unloading on mesdames' chapeaux lampshade fringes, army and navy emblems and braids, church ornaments, clown cloth, and anything that glittered and was not gold -- brocades, metal ribbons, metal laces, guimps, cords, tassels, frogs, rhinestones, spangles, imitation pearls, nailheads, glass leaves, beads, buttons, tinsel threads, lingerie flowers -- these were but a few of our regular items. With plenty of patience and capital, the firm was in the position to wait for "the day." It arrived, and the firm and the U.S. Treasury Department did well.

When, at one time, a European manufacturer sent

us a sample lot of pine needle bath tablets, the odor penetrated the 15,000 square foot floor from end to end. Vicious rumor had it that this was due to a perfuming process to take the B.O. out of our old stock. It delighted my heart when in 1942 and 1943 this maligned collection became the object of ardent wooing by the designers of the Haute Mode. I fear that my plunge into the rapid currents of commercial activity in those years brought me to the climax of December 27, 1943.

In the early morning of that day, I had an attack of acute angina. I will refrain from going into details on this except to say that after nine months of scrupulous care, I was back on my feet, but doctors and the family decided that I must retire. My firm kindly set the day ahead to December 31, 1944.

Thus ended my business career, starting on January 26, 1891, covering a period of nearly 54 years. I never accumulated a fortune in money, but a great wealth of friendship, confidence and respect from customers, suppliers, competitors, employers and employees. As far as I remember, of the enemies I made, I can honestly say that I am proud of them. The names of many friends are well engraven on my memory, and while I do not attempt to mention them here, I think and speak of them frequently. I feel however that I must at this time register the gratitude that is due the

Hirschs, my employers and associates of longest standing.

First, Adolf H., a boyhood pal, maintaining friendly contact throughout the years. He had confidence and sincere interest in me as manifested by his spontaneous offer of employment, at a time when I could not afford another wrong move. It was he who placed me at the level of rank in his organization that is hard to call by name but can be visualized by joining the items of my varied functioning in the business. He was always frank, even in criticism, willing however to retract when events proved him to be wrong. We maintained intimate social relations. In the days when my family went to California, I spent most of my weekends at his hospitable home in Westchester. He is still my friend and I feel that I can lean on him for any friendly service at any time.

Mr. Angelo was the oldest of the brothers at the time I came to the firm. One older, in charge of the French branch, and a younger brother, had died. Angelo, a man of both spiritual and material substance, rational, calm in judgement, openminded and respectful of the different viewpoint. He was outspoken and frank but always considerate of the feelings of others. He, more than his brothers, had absorbed in his youth the atmosphere of small-town Jewish life similar to that of mine in my pre-American days. Despite a considerable difference in our ages, we became

very chummy. We spent most of the Saturday afternoons together, matching story with story from our vast repertoire of reminiscences, emanating from the lives in Roth am Sand in Bavaria and my own Ingwiller.

After spending many years in Philadelphia and New York, he had founded the branch business in Nuremberg. His wife came from there, and before World War I, he lived there for several years. Until the death of his wife, his family spent the summer months there. He was very active in medico-social service work and a patron of art, music, and all things cultural. He enjoyed life, keeping abreast with commercial and social progress to his very end. He died at age 76, much lamented by his family and a host of friends.

Mr. Felix was together with his brothers one of the founders of the business. He became the chief of the French branch after the death of Leopold, an older brother. He made Lyon his family home, sent his children to Swiss, German, and French schools. His sons, Morton and Stephen, were trained for the business, and are the only second generation of the family who entered it. They are now the captains of the old and rugged ship.

Adolf lived with the Felix's when I first met him. I was a frequent visitor and dinner guest at their home on West 136th Street. It was a large household, made up of

the Felix's, their two children, two bachelor brothers, a sister-in-law, and a cousin from upstate, employed in New York. When each one brought in one or more friends, there was always a jolly mass meeting. When we stepped out on a Saturday evening to the Harlem Casino at Seventh Avenue and 124th Street, Stein, the owner, tapped a fresh barrel of Muenchener and tore a couple of maatjes herrings...

Morton was then a little boy of about three, and in one of his earliest pictures, he is all dressed up in a leghorn sailor trimmed with a clipped ostrich pompom, the product of the firm I then represented. Stephen was not yet born. Little did I dream then that 30 years after, I would be in the employ of a house that they were destined to head.

When I visited Europe in 1899, I found at my home a most sincere invitation to spend a part of my vacation with the Hirsch family, then residing at Lyon. In 1931, I spent two weeks with Mr. Felix at our Paris office. I could not help marveling at the close touch of this man, then approaching 70 and in poor health, with every detail of the New York business. Few executives at close range and in constant attendance could as readily lay their hands on things as he could in an organization that was the composite of eight or ten separate businesses. After the death of Mrs. Felix, he retired and spent the rest of his days in

the United States.

Herman had died before I came with the firm. His strength was in selling, but he left a few items for me to dispose of, among them some gilt shoe buttons that eventually found their way from the foot to the head of milady.

Morton, well prepared for the business, would have been successful in anything that he might have undertaken. A tall man of fine appearance, able to think fast and clearly, he is thoroughly familiar with things. He has an enviable memory, a natural talent for mathematics and good taste. Unlike a great many people with this rare combination of qualifications, he is democratic and tolerant. I got along very well with him as did most people that were honest, conscientious and showed average ability for their task.

Stephen, the kid brother, boss's son and nephew, was one of the boys in the making when I joined. I handed him his weekly pay envelope separately while the others had to pick theirs up at the cashier's window. It is sometimes very difficult for a youngster to get just rating from a family of assorted elders or fellow employees who knew him in Kindergarten or even before he was born. He was a hard worker, day and night. Yes, night -- for it is in the night one sees what ladies wear, or not, and we dealt with

the theater and also the lingerie trade. For many years, he and I had adjoining desks, and I had better opportunity to evaluate him than most others. Unlike a lot of rich men's sons, he spent his money carefully, and he has all the earmarks of a money maker. He is not as calm as his brother, but after an occasional tiff, he bears no grudges and gets along with most people.

After having observed the rise and fall of many businesses, going from one family generation to another, I believe I am qualified to say that the Hirsch ship, launched in 1883, has plowed through the rough seas for 58 years and is sailing along proudly, ably manned and safely steered.

When I retired from my own business, I was most proud of the long years of employment of some of my faithful workers. The Hirsch family with no less pride can look back to a like situation, bespeaking a spirit of fairness, tolerance and decency that borders on brotherhood. It is not my least satisfaction that my last years of commercial activity could be spent in this congenial atmosphere.

CHAPTER XXIX: MY COMMERCIAL SIDELINES

After 1915, when my father-in-law passed away, there was added to my crowded calendar, the work of part and then full management of the family owned real estate. This was composed of five tenements located in three separate East Side locations, East 38th, East 95th and East 127th Streets. My wife's mother and brother were the owners. The properties were cold-water tenements, each of 20 units of three and four rooms, no baths, two toilets shared by the four families on each floor. Rentals then were about four dollars per room. The installation of hot water supply and combination wash and bathtubs did not bring but a slight increase in rent, hardly enough to cover cost of operation, but helped in the status of occupancy and slightly in that of the character of tenancy. Only those at the lowest economic strata were willing to live under such conditions of squalor.

Most of the rents had to be collected in instalments and on the tenants' respective pay days. To legitimate causes for delinquency in payment, such as illness and unemployment, were added those of drunkenness and a custom to give half or a whole month of free rent to new tenants. When one considers that five dollars covered the

expense of moving, it is readily seen that the actual application of the slogan "it is cheaper to move than to pay rent" had very tempting appeal. I had notaste for this business and I am proud to say, little qualification for it. Despite rent laws during and immediately after World War I, the nominal yield was very fair. I say "nominal yield," for the pressure from mortgagees was such that by their right of foreclosure, they held a sword over owners, and many played the game of "freeze out" with all the bluff and cunning that operates in the card game of that name.

Savings banks and insurance companies were reasonable enough but some executors of estates and lawyers could nag to desperation. There were no protecting laws as now with reference to foreclosures. Deficiency judgements for the difference between the amounts due and those realized at forced foreclosure, brought many an honest, thrifty owner and his family to the bankruptcy stage.

When my brother-in-law, the half owner, stopped traveling, I transferred my job to him. For several years he made a very good showing in income, a matter to which he still refers with great pride. He made no renovations and only such repairs that halted utter collapse of the properties. He defied Tenement and Building Department violations, resulting in cancellation of liability insurance coverage. He laid himself open in case of an accident to indictment

in which his invalid mother might have become an innocent co-defendant. When one morning at seven, after a night of severe attacks that had kept us on our feet ministering to mother, a deputy called to take him before the Building Commissioner by force, since he had ignored a previous summons, I decided that the partnership must be dissolved. Mother's death soon after delayed action in this matter.

As co-executor with him and a coming change in ownership, giving my wife a 25 per cent interest, I first advocated and then insisted on the acceptance of a very good offer for the three properties on East 95th Street. This left two. In the next five years, my brother-in-law managed the East 38th Street property, then assessed for tax purposes at $35,000, in a manner that yielded a gross monthly rental of $50. The house was crumbling to rubble. The East 127th Street house we boarded up and finally we were glad to have the savings bank mortgagee take it over and release us from our bond obligations.

The East 38th Street property was in the path of the planned crosstown vehicular tunnel and had great speculative value for that reason. A renovation costing over $5000 was decided on, also guarantees of non-interference in my management was given. The income after that covered all fixed charges, allowed some amortizations and the withdrawal of the $5000 renovation advance. It also covered

a fire retarding expense in the next years. For a few years, the property even yielded small cash withdrawals. A change in the city's old plans brought about the construction of the present Queens Midtown Tunnel, leaving our property out of the picture.

As working people began earning higher wages around 1941, our vacancies grew. Most people could afford something better than we had to offer. The death of a janitor, used to the handling of such property, brought more handicaps. Soon we had eight or nine vacancies, resulting in a considerable deficit.

Like in a small neighborhood store, the personality of the caretaker was most important. No janitors were available. I was compelled to spend a great deal of time with this matter at a period when my health was failing. My associate, the majority owner, could not bring himself to pinch-hit for me. The matter worried me while I was bedridden in the first months of 1944. A friend, expert in real estate, at my request, arranged with the attorneys representing the mortgagees to accept assignment of title for a nominal cash consideration in our favor.

I am making record of this without malice to my associate, but to counteract anticipated misstatements, likely to be made by him. My knowledge of his love for complaint and his enjoyment of feeling miserable in an imaginary situation of hard luck and persecution, prompts me to

resort to this unpleasant task of self-defence in advance. I can say without hesitation that his gloomy accounts are disproved by facts and figures. Without pitying myself I can say that I was the only sufferer in the matter. My regular business never disturbed my peace of mind in the degree that did this sideline.

Real estate was for many years the first choice investment for the small business man or the thrifty employee. It offered a yield better than the savings bank, and added to this, there was the fairly general and reasonable expectation of the advancement of ground value in a fast growing metropolis like New York. However, many hard earned dollars and much health and peace of mind were lost in the enterprise. Based on my experience, I would say, "Shoemakers stick to your last." Try to succeed in your own line and leave real estate to the specialist. It is margin buying with nearly all the rack and ruin that had been wrought by stock market speculation. In the stock market, one gets quicker action.

While very little financial benefit accrued to me by this experience with tenement dwellers, it surely supplied great opportunity for more study of human nature as well as the realization of the devastating effect of social and economic inequalities. I am happy to see at this late date, a slight awakening of the public conscience, a will

for slum clearing and an emphasis on decent living conditions for all.

Another matter requiring much time and thought arose by virtue of my appointment as co-executor in the estate of my friend, Henry Wolburg. Henry's untimely death came on July 11, 1932, at age 58. He had retired from a very lucrative silk and ribbon business in 1930. He was a bachelor with a large family of brothers, a sister, nephews and nieces, and my designation by him as one of his executors came as a great surprise to me and apparently as a shock to some of his brothers.

Assuming conscientious responsibility for an estate composed of stocks, bonds, and real estate mortgages, was not an easy matter in 1932. Values were at lowest ebb in all fields of investment and the policy of watchful waiting seemed to be the most plausible. Among a large group of heirs, there are usually those who would rewrite both the testament and the laws that apply to the administration of estates. Our New York State laws are very fair and explicit, mapping out very definite ways of general procedure, but a hungry crowd of selfish, resentful heirs can be a nuisance, especially under the goading of the "expert" advice of would-be chief justices or super lawyers to be found in every family.

Re-investment of income and funds released by

maturing and called bonds, the decline in the real value and safety of inflated real estate loans, requires much time, thought, and power of decision. Offhand I would say that executors earned the commission allowed them by law, a matter in which few heirs concur. At this writing, in the early days of 1946, I am waiting for my release as trustee and executor of this estate. With this disposed of, I will be freed from nearly all of my business activities of about 55 years' duration.

CHAPTER XXX: FREE SYNAGOGUE AND PERSONAL SOCIAL SERVICE

My early religious training and Free Synagogue social service brought to me the conviction that a part of our time, strength and worldly possessions belong to the community at large. I realized that a Jew has the further duty of sharing Jewish life and its problems by affiliation with sectarian organizations such as synagogue and social service, as well as agencies concerned about the affairs of world Jewry. A Christian world has forced us to be our "brother's keeper" even if we would have the will to shun this duty.

When I was in my twenties, social service, then called charity work, had a great appeal for me, the scope of my participation being limited by my modest resources and lack of free time. I have in a preceding chapter spoken of my congregational wanderings. In 1909 I found the congregation that more than any other had the program for the fulfillment of my religious needs. I joined the Free Synagogue in October 1909, impressed with its spirit of democracy exhibited by its underlying principle of no fixed dues, no pews or assigned seats. Membership by voluntary, wholehearted contribution, commensurate with the resources of the applicant, offered equal privileges to

rich and poor. The emphasis on human service, blended with religious service as the perfection of Divine service, had, I repeat, a forceful appeal for me. Social service is charity plus. In addition to relief, it stresses prevention before the collapse, and the removal where possible of the causes of distress and the dangers of relapse.

My growing interest in this unique congregation ripened to ardent enthusiasm, when in 1911, I enrolled my little daughter in the Religious School. It soon became a question of which one between us registered the highest degree of ever-mounting Synagogue fever. As a steady attendant at the Sunday morning school assemblies, I soon became one of the organizers of a parents' association. I was rewarded by unanimous election to its presidency.

In 1914, I was also elected to the Executive Council. The Executive Council was headed by Mr. Henry Morgenthau, Sr., then the president of the congregation. Around the Council table were seated Judge Abram I. Elkus, Mr. Oscar Straus. These three were diplomats, each having represented the United States as Ambassadors to Turkey and in other foreign missions -- the two first-mentioned,under the Wilson, the third,under the Theodore Roosevelt administrations. Other men of big affairs on the Council were Dr. Lee K. Frankel, one time director of the Sage Foundation and later vice-president of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company; Mr. Henry Ittelson, chairman of the board of

C.I.T., prominent in New York philanthropies; Mr. Adolph Lewisohn, head of the Lewisohn copper interests, donor of the Lewisohn Stadium, chief benefactor to the Pleasantville Home for Children, early promoter in the progressive movement of prison reform, patron of art and music and owner of a valuable collection of masterpieces.

I do not portray this scene of wealth and brains to impress the reader with my own importance, but rather to show the spirit of democracy that pervaded this young and vigorous Synagogue organization that dug down to my stratum for the selection of leadership. In age I was 25 years under the average of church and synagogue elders of that period, commercially I was just a pebble alongside of these towering rocks of wisdom and financial strength, but they encouraged my participation in discussion and never resented an opposing opinion that I dared to hold at few instances.

The phrase "Dr. Wise speaks to the Congregation and not for it," was the diplomatic expression of Mr. Oscar Straus, answering a storm of criticism in the Monday morning press after a sermon preached at Carnegie Hall the day before, entitled "Who Are the Bolshevists at Home and Abroad." In this treatise, Dr. Wise sounded a warning note to Judge Gary of the U.S. Steel Trust for its intolerant attitude to its slave workers, earning from $1.75 to $2.25 in a ten-hour day. A concurrent strike in the New York shirtwaist

line, threatening a spread to other industries in which many of our membership was engaged, presaged an enormous flood of resignations. However, only five diehards quit. A unanimous vote of confidence for Dr. Wise was the result.

It was an education and experience to be in the company of these men and I have mentioned their names because they stand out in the history of that day. However, I would be unfair and unappreciative if I would not mention some of the men not in the limelight, but nonetheless great and very important by virtue of their own contribution in work and special talent.

Mr. Charles E. Bloch was among the first to join with Dr. Wise in the founding of the Free Synagogue. As owner of the Bloch Publishing Company, doing business chiefly with the congregations and rabbis that were furious in their attacks on this new movement, he faced an evident loss of business. His viewpoint on liberal Judaism, his integrity of thought, his tolerance of honest opposition and his frank manner impressed me no less than the importance and diplomacy of the above-named giants.

Then there was Benjamin Schloss, social service enthusiast, calm, correct and proper in speech, dress and conduct. Nathan Strauss of New York and Portland, Oregon, our first treasurer and a personal friend of mine long before Free Synagogue days. The other and better known

Nathan Straus, Sr., member of the congregation, while never accepting office, was always on hand when a crisis arose. He was big enough to stand for an attack by Dr. Wise on Dick Croker, Tammany boss, who was Mr. Straus' close friend, a matter hard to understand. There were other Councilmen, each contributing something to the strength of the whole.

I was made a trustee in 1914, but at this writing in 1946, I am resolved, by resignation, to make room for more vigorous replacement. Few men on the Council have had the opportunity to touch the life of the Synagogue in the many phases that presented themselves to me over the years of close contact with the work. From Parents' Association to School Committee, the Ushers' Group, acting as its chairman for many years, chairman on Holy Day admissions, collector on an emergency loan fund and building fund, and last but not least, chairman of the Membership Committee. While the work of the Membership Committee is a very important one in view of its relationship to the acquisition of funds for maintenance, it had for years been very obscure.

This is not said to discredit my predecessors and was chiefly due to the assumption of the work by the Executive Office. Added to the realization that such a committee had important work to do, was a condition that stood out especially after the 1929 crash. After the crash,

the membership annually declined ten to fifteen per cent in numbers and fifteen to twenty per cent in the average amount of contributions. Synagogue and philanthropic institutions were the first victims in the adjustment of budgets under reduced or uncertain incomes. We were fortunate to have in our congregation a nucleus of people, who despite heavy financial losses, fired by a high spirit of duty and sacrifice, and the example set by the rabbis, came to the rescue.

There was and still is the shameful attitude of thousands who asked for Synagogue accommodations on the High Holy Days only, and that, at no cost or a disgraceful minimum. They had money for luxuries but were slackers or at least bargain hunters where congregational affiliation was concerned. I named them the "ten-day Jews," not in the sense of paying merchandise bills in ten days, but because Jewish life started with them on the first day of Tishri and ended on the tenth, lasting from Rosh-Hashonah to Yom Kippur. They expect synagogue and temple to be maintained 100 per cent, so that they can have the two per cent that they want, and of course at no more than two per cent of the average of the cost of full time membership.

There are the "agnostics" that don't believe, but fear the wrath of God and displeasure of departed ancestors. "For the sake of two or five dollars, why take chances?" Then, a more recent pest, is the Yiskorites.

They only want to come in for Yiskor, willing to "stand up in any place." They are on hand at ten A.M., to say Kaddish at 3:30 P.M. They flatter, lie, and even curse in their disappointment, when for good reason, admittance is denied them.

I cannot refrain from relating this, one of hundreds of experiences at Carnegie Hall where services are held, or at the Synagogue house offices, where applicants for Holy Day admission are interviewed. A "lady" living at a good address, sent her maid on Erev-Yom Kippur, for cards of admission. We sent the maid back saying that arrangements had to be made by personal call. A subsequent phone call from her mistress to one of our most courteous and tactful workers and trustees, concluded with a denunciation of all things Jewish, synagogues in particular, calling our leaders "a bunch of dirty kikes."

That evening, not having the necessary card, she was refused admittance at the front entrance of Carnegie Hall, but went to the rear and got on line with others who for one reason or another, felt that exception should be made in their case. She intercepted Dr. Wise on his arrival at the rear entrance, and as a means of least resistance, Dr. Wise took her past the doorman. We, who were in charge of admissions, had heard of the phone incident and by most unusual circumstances, ascertained that here was the

afternoon denouncer. When on the next morning without cards, she tried to impress us with the fact that Dr. Wise himself saw her through the night before, we informed her in no uncertain terms of our intention to keep her out. In her rage she summoned the wrath of the gods on us, tore the pages out of her prayer book, threw them at one of my associates, and then flung the cover at me with her best wishes for a bright and hot future. Now comes the anticlimax. I picked up the pitched book cover, and on the inside of it was typed: "This Book is the property of Park Avenue Synagogue." If I had thought that her wish would come true, I would have said to her in parting: "Till we meet again." !

Other Carnegie incidents inspired the verses that I insert here. They speak for themselves.

Said the lady, "Dear sir, I'm no frisker.
Just as soon as my business is brisker,
Believe me, good friend,
That a check I will send
If you'll let me get in just for Yisker."

"Dear lady, we're on to your josh,
And take it for just so much bosh;
To be cleansed of your wrong --
Go to Lee, Sing or Fong --
With us, it's 'no tickee, no wash.'"

Another limerick inspired by the following incident leaves more pleasant memories. A gentleman without card stood around the Carnegie Hall lobby and witnessed the following: a French family, newly arrived, held two

cards, but four came. The gentleman mentioned above overheard French conversation between them and myself, and saw that they were admitted. When he thought the coast was clear, he tried to work the "me no spik Inglish" trick, little realizing that in all New York, there is one Frenchman guarding the entrance of a synagogue, and he was the man being approached. In his best Yiddish-German-French accent, he went up to the guard, saying: "Monsieur, parlez-vous francais?" to which the guard answered in the most fluent Parisian style. Our impersonating friend nearly lost his equilibrium on the steps leading to Carnegie Hall entrances, and left the scene, mumbling his good wishes in several languages that he spoke better than French. To him I dedicate this little verse:

On Yom Kippur, a synagogue breaker
Tried to force his way in. Said the faker,
"Monsieur, s'il vous plait,
Je ne parle rien que francais."
Said the guard, "Sir, you also parle 'sheker.'

"Mon cher ami, it's readily seen
That your manner as well as your mien
And your accent of French
Have a flavor or stench
As if hatched somewhere hinter Berlin."

Another humorous incident was supplied by the arrival at Carnegie Hall on Yom Kippur morning of a gentleman from Holland. He stated that he had landed only the day before, had plans of spending the holiday with his brother at Dallas, Texas, but a delay on the ocean detained him.

Under his arm he held a black velvet bag containing his Tallith (Talles). He spoke English haltingly. Having his Talles in mind, I called attention to the fact that he was at a liberal Synagogue where neither hats nor prayer shawls were worn. I told him however that there would be no objection if he wished to wear both as was his custom. The following verses describe the ensuing little episode:

The Prying Dutchman

A Nederlaender Israelit,
Just landed at this shore,
With hat in hand said: "Please admit
A stranger through this door!

"Away from home and Frau and kin
On this most holy day,
Repentant of my wrong and sin,
I've come to fast and pray."

The usher, bound by steadfast rule,
Explains to Mister Dutch --
To gain admittance to this Shul,
One must do such and such.

Be he a member or a guest,
He must present a card --
All this is necessary lest
The people crash the guard.

Yet an exception must be made,
For he is from the land
That to our fathers welcome bade
When others struck and banned.

So he was shown to choicest place
Where he could see and hear,
But instantly he did retrace
His steps unto the rear.

"Excoose me, please, could I sit next
To some one who will speak;
I am a stranger, slightly vext,
And much to me is Greek."

"Good friend, we do not talk nor chant,
Nor sleep, nor snore, nor wail;
We ask that every congregant
To God his heart unveil.

"What information do you seek?
Perhaps I can explain't
The thing that looks to you all Greek;
Come, speak without restraint."

"Have you in these United States
A Chief-Rabbi, a Boss?
Who pays for all; who makes the rates;
Have profit you, or loss?

"Another question, oder two:
Good sir, don't think me dumm,
Is Doctor Wise a real Jew,
And is he yet quite frumm?"

"If beating breast or lifting heels,
Or swaying to and fro,
A man's great piety reveals,
Then I must answer: 'No!'"

"Just one more question, please allow,
Before I leave New York:
Do Doctor Wise and his good Frau
At home eat ham and pork?"

Interviews with applicants for Holy Day seating arrangements inspired my paraphrasing of KoKo's song from the "Mikado" entitled, "I Have a Little List." This is as KoKo would report, were he Free Synagogue Membership Chairman:

As some day it may happen that we must know who
is who
I've got a little list, I've got a little list
Of a"gimme" type of persons that make a great to do,
And who never will be missed, who never will be
missed.

There's the pestilential nuisances who think they
can't afford,
And for this situation, they those reasons do record:

Our chauffeur, who's a Russian prince, he's touched us for
a raise,
A Lincoln, made by Henry Ford, took our Cadillac's place;
We're sure in our embarrassment on pay you can't insist.
If so we must be missed, if so we must be missed.

I've got a little list, I've got a little list,
And they'll none of them be missed, they'll none of them
be missed.

- - - - - -

There's the lady from Park Avenue in sables and in seals.
I've got her on the list, I've got her on the list.
Impossible to join with us, for frankly she reveals,
Except Yom Kippur afternoon, she is an atheist.
For father and for mother, who are in Eternal rest,
She wants to say the Kaddish for two dollars, that's the best.
Her offer we rejected, and this must have got her "goat"
And what she said thereafter, verbatim let me quote:
"If this is called religion, oh, thank God, I'm atheist!"
She never will be missed, no, she never will be missed.

I've got her on the list, I've got her on the list,
And she never will be missed, she never will be missed.

- - - - - -

There's the stranger with a chronic case of Nausea New-Yorkis,
I've got him on the list, I've got him on the list.
This malady is quite acute on thorough Diagnosis
But he never will be missed, he never will be missed.
He left back home ten years ago, yet has that homesick look
And quotes the Love-of-Stranger tale, that's in the Holy Book.
While others join and work and pay with real geniality,
He shuns his duty, saying: "Sir, where's hospitality?"
And in his wrath he calls us names like blank-blank Communist.
He never will be missed, he never will be missed.

I've got him on the list, I've got him on the list;
And he never will be missed, he never will be missed.

- - - - - -

At 68th Street, 40 West, there was a sudden breeze
That blew away my list, that blew away my list.
A voice was heard in baritone "See here, I am the Cheese,
"On attention I insist, on attention I insist.
When I met Steve in gay Paris, I promised him I would
Come to his Shul and sit it through, provided he is good.
Four tickets, please, down on the aisle.. You speak of mem-
bership

And advertise Free Synagogue? The whole thing is a gyp.
Tell Steve to get in touch with me at Pierre's, I must insist."
But we decided, then and there, he never will be missed.

We've got him on the list, we've got him on the list,
And he never will be missed, he never will be missed.

- - - - - -

But for our loyal membership of people sound and true,
I do not need a list, I do not need a list.
Despite the scourge that threatens us by foe of God and Jew,
My faith and spirit call to me: Man, be an optimist!
To him who holds the banner high of Freedom and of Right,
Let's rally, we, and all the Jews who seem to have lost sight.
With open eyes, courageous hearts, oh, brothers of my race,
The enemy is at our heels, turn right about and face!
The malice born of prejudice and cowardice and hate
Will some day, with the help of God, in love evaporate.

I do not need a list, I do not need a list.
In the service of humanity, let's all of us enlist.

April 1935

My family's enthusiasm infected some of our friends and quite a few of them had joined. The same enthusiasm induced others, congregationally affiliated elsewhere, to contribute financially to some of our social service work, also to the Institute of Religion, the Child Adoption, and even the Building Fund. The most substantial of these gifts is a legacy from my friend, H.W., amounting to a considerable sum.

Membership in the Free Synagogue was not a popular thing among the affluent of our people nor the anti-union employers nor Wall Street brokers and anti-Zionists. Dr. Wise, preaching the truth as he saw it, frequently offended these groups. I recall many a heated argument with the

fearful, fascist, pianissimo Jews one meets on his rounds socially and commercially.

I spent an evening, at a time when my family was away, at the home of a Wall Street broker who had resigned from the Synagogue, embittered by a remark Dr. Wise had made in 1928 about stock exchange gambling. My host and another guest gave me a thorough going-over in the alleged demerits of our work. To the other guest, most of my arguments were new and as the evening grew, he showed symptoms of sympathetic agreement. This seemed to have a mitigating effect on the host. At parting that evening, he asked me to send him a pledge card used in a Free Synagogue Building Fund campaign then in progress. A few days after came his check for $750 and a pledge for an additional $250 payable at the completion of the building.

I am not recording these matters in a spirit of bravado but only to show how important a part in my life my Synagogue played. Few things have given me more satisfaction than the consciousness that in a small way, I have contributed by spirit and substance to the most effective congregation in American life, greatly misunderstood by many, as is religion and God Himself. I wish here to repeat what I have so often said, that I have high regard for some people, who without church or synagogue attendance, in their own way, give evidence of a consciousness of relationship

to the Divine Spirit and a responsibility in the shaping of the high destiny of mankind. In return I would expect them to respect the church member of any creed who wishes to serve God and man in all sincerity.

At this time the nucleus of founding members of the Free Synagogue has, alas, dwindled to a small circle. It is regrettable that the second generations of so many of these families have drifted away. This is not a unique situation with us. Most congregations have this experience more or less. Removal from the city, marriages into families with other affiliations, indifference to and a desire to hide away from things Jewish, are some of the reasons. I used to say that our family eats, drinks, talks and sleeps Free Synagogue. Now I can add, we also married Free Synagogue in the second generation, and so far have linked the third with it by the choice of my grandson to prepare himself for the rabbinate at the Institute of Religion. Thus the rabbinic tradition in the family remains unbroken.

In no lesser degree am I grateful to the Free Synagogue for showing me the way to constructive human service. I am at a loss to explain why the Synagogue Social Service never availed itself of that for which, I believe, I had more ability than the many other activities in which I was asked to take part. I was never on the Social Service Board. I had shown by many acts the symptoms of understanding of constructive service and a will to render it.

Forty years ago, very few people observed anniversaries of joy and sorrow in my particular way, not new or even unusual in the lives of the pious orthodox Jews, who "schnodered" at such occasions. Some of this practice was with them not always sacrificial, but rather a gesture made with the least pain to swell credits in the Book of Life. Reform Judaism, amputating so much that is vital from the ritual and the custom, made no direct replacement for these forms of Zedakah (justice-charity). I tried to translate this old custom to modern practical application.

When in the summer of 1915, Dr. Goldstein asked for volunteers to be prepared in an evening class to work with juvenile delinquencies brought about by the war, I was one of two men with 21 women to register. I was an occasional observer at the mental hygiene clinics, held weekly at the Synagogue House. My interest in social service was evident.

Personal service became a necessity for me. It was not difficult to find an outlet for this need. Life in the 1920's supplied many cases if one looked for them, and before long I had a one-man social service department that became far reaching. I had the idea to form among the employers in the Free Synagogue, an industrial welfare work, patterned after that of some of the larger organizations. This was to give service to firms employing from a few, to 75 or 100 people; to supply medical, nursing,

recreational and social care. The expense was to be shared pro rata by the member employers. This was too much out of this world even for those exposed to Free Synagogue spirit.

Personal service, intelligently and promptly rendered, can be very effective. Many people in distress are hesitant about accepting organizational services, mistakenly feeling that charity is being done. They will, however, welcome a friendly hand from an individual with the proper approach and understanding. Generally, trained professional workers surpass in effectiveness the amateur volunteer. All too many volunteers enter the field for selfish reasons, to rub shoulders with the prominent or to be able to talk about their own accomplishments, but there are special cases when a consecrated volunteer with tact can render fine service. The Good Samaritan, however, should know the limitations of his or her own ability to serve or advise.

Distress emanates from many causes. Some appear trifling at the outset but mount to overpowering force if not discovered and checked in time. I have found my personal service best applied in cases that came to me in the everyday routine of my business. I select a case that had a multitude of counterparts in those days.

I had an employee going to pieces under the strain

of worry about conditions in her home. A coughing father, an overworked mother, a shiftless sister, employed, a little sister very ill, a bright little brother, newsboy after school, and a boarder, made up her home. The family lived in four rooms on the ground floor of a lower East Side tenement. Every member of this household required social care, but the sick little sister was the chief victim of its maladjustment. The proud parents would sooner have starved than "accept charity." Here was a case where guidance, offered by someone who could gain their confidence, could effect a cure without the expenditure of money, or at most a small loan. Let me draw a rough sketch of this drab situation.

The father was a fur cutter with short, seasonal occupation, small wages, working under unsanitary conditions. He did odd jobs if possible in the six to eight months of his dull season. The oldest girl, a millinery preparer in my employ, earned the standard wage paid for such work. The shiftless sister, frequently staying away from her gloomy home under many pretexts, contributed almost none of her small earnings. A little brother of ten, the newsboy, was out late into the night to derive the benefit of newspaper sales after theater closings. The little sister of twelve was anaemic, nervous, absent from school for months; her illness drained the resources of the family

income to the drugs. In her state, she had her couch in the front room. Note the importance of this. There was also the boarder, a Landsman, good man, employed in a slaughter house. He felt that he must stay with his friends in order not to deprive them of the few dollars he paid for board. Figure out the distribution of this family for sleeping accommodations. Everybody entered the flat through the front room, other exits being blocked by necessary furniture. This frail little girl, as you will see by the following household schedule, never had a chance for her needed rest.

The mother's work day began with breakfast for the boarder at 5 A.M., and ended with the homecoming of the newsboy. Hours for meals were: breakfast 5 A.M. to 8 A.M., supper 5 P.M. to one hour after the sale of the last evening paper by her little son. I will not go into further detail about the natural squalor of this home. In better days, when the father earned more, the family lived on a more normal scale and in larger quarters.

In planning a solution, I had the help of two of my employees, girls living nearby. I also enlisted medical and recreational services rendered by agencies to which Dr. Goldstein referred me. It took very little money, but prompt action, in the reordering of the family life. Larger living quarters, different work for the father, removal of the boarder -- were the initial steps. The

shiftless sister, with the assistance of the two above-mentioned girls in my employ, improved with the changing conditions in the home and took her proper place in the family unit. With my usual immodesty, I daresay that I doubt that professional, organized charity could have done a better job and surely not with the nominal expenditure of money.

Another case, less drastic, showing where personal service, supplementing that of an institution, can be applied in a constructive way, is that of my pseudo-adoption of two lonely old men. Physically they were cared for in an old folks' home. The one, Mr. B., came from Franklin, Louisiana, where with the help of his late wife, he had made a living operating a small retail store. After the death of his wife, without other family, he wandered away from that small town where he had lived for 40 years and was looking for employment in several of the larger cities of the South. This was during World War I, and he was encouraged by flippant advice from those who would not give him a chance, to go North to the Big City. He had been born in Alsace-Lorraine and on his arrival in New York, looked up Landsleute. After receiving the "brushoff" from several, he was fortunate in meeting a Mr. W., who befriended him and also referred him to me. After some conversation with him, I discovered that he was the long-lost brother

of my brother's mother-in-law. He had last written to her 37 years ago, was surprised to hear that she was still alive, as well as two other sisters in France. He was about 66 but looked like a man of 90. My offer of an emergency loan until such time that work could be found, brought forth his request to take care of his fortune of about $80, sewed in his inside coat pocket.

Employment seemed impossible, but I told him to come to my office every day until we can together solve his problem. He did not appear the next day. When I phoned the tenth-rate hotel where he was stopping, I was told that he had checked out. The reason for this sudden change in address was cleared up when, the next morning, I received a letter from him stating that he had found a night job to run an elevator at No. 1 West 85th Street. He had moved to a furnished room nearby at $2.50 a week, and his wage was to be $65 a month. On my way home that evening, I dropped off at his place of work, looked at the tenants' chart, to discover to my delight, that one of my old-time friends lived in the building. My friend took a very kindly interest in this old man, and soon he became a great favorite with the tenants. He was showered with attention and it became necessary for him to co-ordinate their proffered hospitality lest he fall victim to the complications of overeating. He knew before 9 P.M. each evening, as the card parties assembled, how many repititions of midnight

snacks he would have that night. He saved all his wages and the greater part of his tips. His nest-egg in my safe had grown to a sizable amount.

He had resumed the long-interrupted correspondence with his sisters in France. False pride on both sides, suppressing the real facts in their letters, led to the mistaken belief that he had 60 tenants in his New York house. On the other hand, his brother-in-law in Paris was an automobile manufacturer. Mounting capital and a reawakened Wanderlust brought the urge for retirement to spend the rest of his life with his family in France.

He gave up his job and arrangements for his trip were started. We struck a snag when we applied for passport and exit papers from the State Department. We found out that Mr. B. had never become an American citizen although he had voted in Louisiana for more than 35 years. It took several weeks to clear matters and to conserve his funds, my brother Emile took him to his home in Newark. He sailed away with a trousseau, collected from family wardrobes, that would have done honor to any American millionaire.

Disillusionment came when he found his brother-in-law, the "automobile manufacturer," in reality to be a handyman in a Paris garage; one sister was in very modest circumstances and another one was unwilling either to forgive

his many years of aloofness or to give from her pile of accumulated substance. All concerned were quite agreed that his return trip to America would be best.

After his arrival here, he was able to get back his former job, but not for long. An accident in lifting a heavy rug proved to be a great handicap, and it was evident that an old folks' home was the only solution for his problem. He had the obsession that entry into such an institution was the equivalent of self-imprisonment for life. With the help of Nature striking him with a series of stubborn colds that kept my family busy as visiting nurses, he finally decided, in the loneliness of his furnished room, that homes for the aged had some things in their favor. We were fortunate to have him admitted to the Home For Aged and Infirm Hebrews. The last moment he balked and did not appear at the time for his entrance. I rounded him up and after a heart to heart but firm talk and restated assurances that he will never be a forgotten man, he complied with my wishes. He lived there for about 12 years and passed away at age 78.

Mr. L., his roommate, had been a waiter in a New York restaurant. He was a bachelor. His only relatives were nephews and nieces. He was honest, cheerful, and had a fine sense of humor -- qualities that neutralized the pessimism and fears of his companion. The two men got along like brothers. My weekly visits were anticipated events

with them, and together we would have grand times in make-believe Florida trips in winter and refreshing summer vacations in mountains or on the shore.

Ed Jr., then a young boy, was always a welcome visitor with them. Sympathetic Lucile, all too ready to be kind, would break down into tears at the sight of these lonely old men and for this reason, rarely saw them. My wife was ever ready to take over when illness or absence from the city prevented my doing my duty. We treated these men as families do their rich bachelor uncles.

It takes so little to bring some joy and comfort to people on the last lap of their earthly race. By comparison, old people seemed to fare worse than do the orphans, the sick or the handicapped, as far as outside attentions were concerned. I tried to interest friends, especially men, to give a little of their time and some money, and to co-operate with me in the expansion of this personal service, different and more intimate than the work of existing auxiliary organizations, chiefly women's groups, that gave parties and in many forms, brought entertainment and cheer. Two or three welcomed the idea, but their early enthusiasm spent itself rapidly and the fire of their zeal extinguished by degrees.

In 1932 and 1933, the two men passed on. My health at that time was not the best and I did not continue

my visits to the Home. Now that I have occasion to renew my visits there, to be in touch with a friend recently admitted, I am delighted to find that many of my dreams for improvement have become realities. I marvel at the many inaugurations that testify to the genius of understanding of the men and women in the direction of affairs. I am not saying this, pointing an accusing finger at the management in the past. They did their best with the means then at their disposal. Like medicine, so has social service made progress under trained specialists and a changed psychology as to prevention, relief and reconstruction in human distress.

My friends often asked me how I became mixed up with such matters. My answer in present day parlance would be: I am allergic to distress and recklessly expose myself to it. The following infection resulted from hearing a casual remark made by a friend, one Saturday evening, across the table in an ice cream parlor, where six of us tried to cool off after a hot vaudeville show. E.J.N., one of the party, told us of the trouble one of the boys at his office was in. He described the boy to be about nineteen, serious, intelligent, likeable, with a clean record of over four years of employment with the firm. E.J.N. did not have all the details but knew that $175 in merchandise had been bought by the boy and had been charged to the firm.

On Monday he would either have to make good or be prosecuted.

At a glance, I could see that this was not the work of a hardened crook. Something special must have happened to induce him to commit this act. I expressed the wish to see and talk to this boy. He was sent to me on Monday morning. After assuring him of my wish to help, on condition that he tell me the whole truth no matter how painful this may be, he told me his story.

His name was Jack E., age 19, the oldest of five children. His father, irregularly employed, deserted the family when Jack was ten years old. His mother's meager earnings, together with the pennies earned by him and his sister of nine, selling newspapers, were supplemented by allowances from the Brooklyn Jewish Charities. The father returned after some months, but again deserted the family, this time for a longer stretch. Jack left high school at 14, and subsequently got his first and only job. This was in the New York buying office of a large Texas firm. His last duties there had to do with the opening of the mail, also the distribution of confirmations of orders and the follow up as to deliveries. This put him in touch with many of the suppliers of his firm. On rare occasions, he was permitted to have small personal purchases charged to the New York office. His salary was $14 per week. Despite

demoralizing home conditions, he had done his work well and had great hopes for advancement in his position and the opportunity of improving the home situation.

Overwhelming sorrow came to him with the death of his mother, five months before. He, his sister of 18, and a brother of 16, worked hard to keep the home going. The father, who had returned shortly before the mother's death, gave little to the home except abuse. On a Sunday, about six weeks after the mother's death, Jack returned home to find that his father had remarried, adding a stepmother and three children to his "happy" family. He was glad when his pal called for him to spend the evening with him. His pal recognized the stepmother as one of shady reputation. At bedtime, his friend left him on the steps of his house. He couldn't bring himself to enter it and wandered through the streets, finally hiding away for the night in Prospect Park. He went to work on Monday morning. His father put in an early appearance, called him to the outer hall of the offices, and beat him up unmercifully.

Thoughts of suicide, runaway plans and other drastic action became his obsession. He started to buy things for his sisters, his friends, nothing for himself. These articles were charged to the firm, and the transactions appeared on the regular monthly statements. Statements were intercepted by him in the mails, but the day of reckoning had to come.

I was moved by this heartrending story and impressed with the manner in which it was told. There was only one disturbing symptom, namely, his lack of repentance. He realized that he had done wrong, but was overwilling to put all the blame on his good-for-nothing father. My frank, even sharp criticism of this brought forth signs of his capacity for moral self purging, a spirit temporarily lowered by bitterness and a desire for vengeance.

I made the following proposition to him, subject to approval by his employers. He could come to me as a shipping room assistant, and start at the salary he last received -- $14; that from this, two dollars weekly should be sent to his employers as payment on account of his debt; that he agree to live on the remaining $12 according to a budget that he and I would work out; that a weekly accounting was to be made to me and that nothing affecting him was to be kept from me; and that finally, he must realize that he must pay a self-inflicted penalty by virtue of sacrifice and self-denial, and co-operate with me in every way to bring back his self-esteem, confidence and new hope. He readily accepted.

Now to the party of the first part. We knew each other by sight; the firm occasionally did business with me. I told Mr. S., the partner in charge of the New York office, that I am in this case through his cousin,

E.J.N. At first he was resentful, then obdurate, in his insistence on immediate payment in full - or else... Soon better judgement prevailed and he accepted my proposition after additional guarantees from me that I never disclosed to the debtor.

Jack started working with me the following morning. This was in the summer of 1917. He was exempt from military service on account of a crippled left hand. All went well for several weeks. One morning Dr. B., social director of the Brooklyn Educational Alliance, called and asked to see Jack in private. Jack's shock at seeing Dr. B. was very noticeable and left no doubt in my mind that more trouble was in store. I told Dr. B. that under existing arrangements, all of Jack's affairs concerned me. In my private office the following episode came to light.

Jack was a regular attendant at the Educational Alliance, well-liked, a leader of his group, but had disappeared about four months ago. He had been treasurer in the sale of tickets for one of their affairs, and while all cash was turned over to him, he failed to take care of a printer's bill in the amount of $32. This also happened during the time of the buying spree. In private, Dr. B. told me that the boy had been a model member, and he approved my plan of collecting a dollar a week for the clearing of the debt. In Dr. B.'s presence, Jack's consent to this was asked and spontaneously given by him. A readjustment

of the budget was necessary, taking off nickels and dimes where possible. I am sure that walking from 38th Street to the Brooklyn Bridge to save five cents in carfare, was never economically sound, but it had a valuable moral effect. At the year end, a raise in salary relieved the tension.

In 1918 the shipyards in Staten Island offered alluring wages even to young boys. Jack asked to be released to take advantage of the offer of such a job at five dollars a day. At that time, the account with the Alliance had been squared and only a small balance was due on the other one, which with increased earnings, could be disposed of very promptly.

In sending the last instalment, I called attention to this fact. When the firm did not have the decency to acknowledge this, I decided to collect my outlay of postage. This was sent to me in a blank letterhead and envelope.

After Armistice Day in November 1918, Jack lost his shipbuilding job. He felt that there was no legitimate opening for him in my place, and together we looked around for his employment elsewhere. After only a few days, he found something, but was worried about his references. I promised to co-operate with him on this. The new employer was apparently sufficiently impressed not to make inquiries. Jack rose rapidly in his new position, became the pal of the owner's son, and several years after, married the boss's daughter. Jack's calls after he left my employ gradually grew

less frequent. He probably wanted to forget as much as possible the old unpleasant past.

It is readily seen that only close and constant watching could be effective in the solution of this case. I know of no professional agency that could have given it the attention and guidance that it required from day to day at close range.

With slight hesitancy, I want to mention an incident connected with the above matter, that will prove in how many ways sacrificial work is rewarded, often in the most subtle manner. I had not seen Dr. B. since the day of his call on me. One evening, several years after, he spied me in a lecture audience, sitting several rows ahead of him. In the semi-dark auditorium, he was not certain of my identity. He noticed me waving my hand to a lady seated near him. He asked her whether she knew me. She replied: "Slightly." "Is his name 'Uhry'?" She answered: "I think so." "I must tell you of an experience.." Dr. B. related the Jack E. case to the lady, then remarked that he must go up to shake hands. The lady: "I'll join you. There is a vacant seat next to him now. You see, he is my husband."

Family and business associates, whose attention was of necessity drawn to these activities, frequently would ask how one finds such cases, or how one is found. I often wonder how Mr. Anthony and Mr. Alexander collect

the variety of the freakish situations that come before them. Mine were the simpler ones, in their early stages, resulting from malregulation of life, unemployment, misemployment, and other disturbing factors as exhibited in the cases I related above. We hear of a sixth sense that some humans possess, enabling them to see and hear things not audible or visible to the average man. I claim no such gift. A will to expose oneself to infection with other people's troubles and a reasonable readiness to help in the solution, supply ample opportunity for service.

The popular motto "Mind your own business" is, in my judgement, one of our most abused precepts. Most people overwork this principle by keeping aloof from any situation that may tax their time, comfort or pocketbook, and on the other hand, ignore it to satisfy their morbid curiosity or to spice the brew of gossip.

The "citizen-fixit" with a black eye or a broken nose has long been the subject for the cartoonist on the funny pages.

Another often misapplied axiom is that of "Charity begins at home." It should begin at home, but not end there.

In the matter of service, or rather the evasion of it, a great variety of human weaknesses come to the fore. The "let George do it" type is the one we meet most frequently. The most contemptible one is he who phones or

writes to you, with tears rolling down his cheeks, to tell you that he has referred a matter to you that has broken his heart and "paralyzed his hand." To some of them, I told the old story of the Schnorrer who comes begging to the banker. He has a sick wife, a dying child, etc. The banker rings for his attendant and in sobbing voice tells him: "John, throw this poor man out -- he is breaking my heart."

With more than forty years of contact with business people, I acquired a large acquaintance and a fair measure of good will that came in good stead in the days when I was looking for employment for both natives and immigrants. The 1930 to 1935 years were difficult enough, but the rise of Hitler and the arrival of refugees brought a seemingly overwhelming situation. The threatened Ausrottung (extermination) of the Jews of Europe became more terrifying as time went on. In the first years, some managed to bring out their households, jewelry, furs, clothing, art treasures, cameras, and even smuggled cash. These uprooted victims, cast out to find refuge in a land of alien language and custom, were a sad sight, but nothing to compare with the later arrivals. Most of the latter had drunk deeper from the bitter cup of Nazi fiendishness, had lived through nightmares of most beastly atrocity and humiliation, their bodies and souls bearing the scars of physical torture and

harrowing recollections of dear ones beaten, murdered, or driven into concentration camps. "Be happy if you can, you minders-of-your-own-business! You may not know it but you will some day, in some way, pay for your blind unconcern, together with the let-George-do-its!"

Did one have to look far for opportunity for service? It was heartening to see many good folks offer time and money to the established agencies. Few know better than I do of the constructive consecrated work that was and is being done by them. I availed myself frequently of their good offices, speeding up arrangements for the departure from European countries of some of the unfortunates. I think with admiration and gratitude of their co-operation in the distribution of people from this crowded center to other parts of the United States, where affiliated organizations, like the Council of Jewish Women, the American Joint Distribution Committee, Hias, the Refugee Service, American Jewish Congress, and others took over the responsibilities first assumed by their parent organizations. I rejoice at hearing from time to time from some folks that have found a paradise in Ohio, California, and in other states. For evident reasons, New York, the big Jewish city, had the greatest attraction for the emigres. They wanted to be with relatives, or at least with other Jews after their haunting experiences in the "Christian" world of Europe. I was often

shocked, however, to be informed by some, that their relatives living in the West or South, when giving affidavits, made the condition that the families must never think of settling in their home towns. It is easy to figure out their motives for this injunction, but hard to believe in these days of world-wide attack on our people.

Another contemptible attitude was that of some American employers of German-Jewish descent that were as fearful of refugee applicants for jobs as were the paranoiacs that had driven them from their land. I might have understood this frame of mind had I found it in employers of Eastern European origin, men who still might remember the inhospitality from German Jews when they landed here, also the social discrimination that is made against them even to this day.

Another painful situation that I met was the tendency to generalize and condemn all for the unworthiness of one. Here is an experience illustrating this point. I had been promised a job for a newly arrived young man, educated and speaking English fluently. When I took him to my friend -- a kind, sympathetic man, well remembering his own experience in the Kishinev pogroms -- he took me aside and with unaccustomed bitterness, gave vent to his wrath. A few days before, his wife had taken a German refugee as houseworker. Under the stress of extra work resulting from

the entertainment of a few guests at lunch, this displaced, beaten woman, lost her head and on small provocation, called her madame and her guests "a bunch of dirty k...." My friend was reasonable enough to listen to my treatise on generalizations, and despite his anger, agreed to employ the young man, who fully substantiated my contention in this matter.

I regret that I met with similar situations several times. It is aggravating, and few people have the tolerance to make allowances. Here are people, merchants, doctors, lawyers, artisans, city and small town burghers of various degrees of education. In pre-Hitler days, they too absorbed more or less of the arrogant superman spirit in which they lived. Along comes the crushing blow, striking pride and dignity to the dust of humiliation, solid comfort to poverty, and a final shove into a strange world. Let us visualize the experience and our own reaction to it under similar circumstances.

In a previous paragraph, I mentioned that I tried to confine my work to simple cases in their incipient stage. Most of them gained momentum as they rolled along, from bad to worse. Typical in this respect is the experience of a young man, son of nice parents that I knew in the old country. He had come into my life about 15 years before, married man with wife and a small child. He had been employed by distant

relatives who no doubt paid him adequately for his services. He was more ambitious than capable and dissatisfied with most things. This eventually cost him his job and he floundered from one thing to another in the search for a livelihood. His two best qualities were a will to work hard and an innate sense of honesty.

Long periods of unemployment had forced him to store his still-mortgaged household furniture. I say "still-mortgaged," for there was a small balance due to an instalment firm from which it was bought eight or nine years before. He lived with his wife and little daughter in one dark furnished room and somehow managed to exist and even reduce his furniture debt of originally $1300 to one of $87.50. As storage charges kept mounting, he was unable to meet them, and permitted foreclosure of his furniture.

I had helped him to secure a job with the Collier Corporation, then operating the subway newsstands. He was in charge of one of them at the I.R.T. station at 33rd Street and Seventh Avenue. His basic wages were about $60 monthly and there were some provisions for commission earnings onsales above a fixed minimum. Employees were responsible for shortages of merchandise, and I doubt that in the four years of his employment, he ever had a week without a deduction. In this busy, noisy station, this nervous man was easy prey for hoodlums who would lift candy packages

and run away before he could stop them. Whenever the amounts would be considerable, he would come to me with a sad inventory sheet, to help him strike the balance.

He left for work at 7 A.M., and did not return until 8 P.M., or later. His calls therefore were usually in the very late evening hours. One night he came to me saying in Gabriel Heatter fashion, only in reverse: "I have bad news tonight." The instalment furniture house, some weeks before, had brought suit against him for the $87.50 owing them and got judgement by default, for the amount owing, plus costs. Under the law, all above a small amount of a man's wages can be garnisheed and the Collier Corporation was notified of the contemplated action. For good reasons, they countenanced no such situation with their employees and at once ordered a substitute to take over my friend's station. They gave him a chance to remove the encumbrance within three days. I asked him to see the creditors, pay them five dollars on account, and make promise to pay small amounts monthly, on condition that the attachment on his wages would be stayed. The creditor firm did not agree to this and my friend was out of a job. My personal call on the head of the Collier Corporation -- an understanding person -- and my offer of certain guarantees such as an increase in the cash deposit that I had made as security at the beginning of employment, as well as the appreciatian

on the part of this gentleman of my interest in the matter, induced him to reverse orders and re-install my friend unconditionally.

I notified him of this good news. The next day, however, I phoned the credit man of the furniture house, proposing a compromise cash settlement by a payment of $50. The proposal was rejected. After all was said and done, my friend J. appeared several days after, to tell me that his wife did not want him to go back to this job. He found other work after a long search. This was hazardous for one inexperienced, but he was lucky for the short time it lasted.

No work, no wage, more discontent, ill temper, a fight at home. The family then had moved in with in-laws. One Saturday, J. appeared, looking down-at-the-heels, explaining that after a confab, he had walked out on Tuesday. On his return home that evening, he found himself locked out. He had lived at a Mills Hotel and then lacked the means to continue at this 50-cents-a-night hostelry. I gave him some money and the advice to go home.

The following Wednesday afternoon, his wife came to my office. I had not seen her since I had expressed my opinion of one who, like her, refuses to co-operate to supplement the husband's insufficient earnings. She asked me: "Did you send J. to the Bellevue Hospital Saturday?"

As the plot unfolded, I found that instead of heeding my advice to return home, J. had gone to Bellevue and asked to be examined. He told the doctors there that some men were following him. He had shown signs of a slight persecution mania at other times. Psychiatrists at Bellevue, after observation, agreed that he should be committed, sent for his wife, who that day had completed the necessary routine for his commitment to Creedmoor State Hospital on Long Island. I was shocked and reaffirmed some of the uncomplimentary criticism I had made of the wife on other occasions.

Immediately, intelligently written letters came from J. I sent for one of the men in his wife's family and became convinced that none of them would raise a hand to change matters. Rational, pleading letters continued coming. He worked in the bakery and had freedom of movement within the walls of the institution.

His wife called on him occasionally but refused to consider an application for his release. He became bitter. When one afternoon, he loomed beside my desk, I thought that the unexpected had been effected by his wife. But no, it was just a visit. I can only make a guess as to the manner in which such an outing can be arranged. Calling on two or three friends in the city and bringing home the bacon to be shared with the gatekeepers, would seem

to be a plausible explanation. After several of these calls, I decided to get a report from the medical chief at the hospital. I was informed that a job and a home would be fairly sure guarantees for a normal life outside. Request from the wife would be best, but other guarantees might be considered.

About that time, a gentleman appeared at my place of business, introducing himself as Mr. K. Mr. K. brought greetings from J. He continued, saying: "I promised him to see you as soon as I would be out. I was discharged three days ago. I was justly committed four years ago, after I attacked my nagging wife with a carving knife, but J., he never belonged there. I know, sir. Please get him out. I will help all I can. I am an expert tailor with a record of 24 years of continuous employment with one of New York's best known custom tailors."

Renewed appeal to the wife only brought obstinate refusal. She and her daughter, then 18, lived with her mother. She rightfully feared the old-time strife, aggravated by increased uncertainty of income. There was neither a household nor money to buy one, etc., etc. I asked to speak to the daughter, then employed and earning $16 weekly. The daughter was an echo of her elders. My question as to her association with boys and girls, and a more disturbing one as to what she would answer a future young suitor

who would inquire about her father, set her to thinking.

This was a matter beyond the bounds of my reasonable financial contribution, and I consulted with my friend A.S., a busy merchant, who many times had given me carte blanche in drafting his financial help in anything that I deemed worthy of our joint support. In fact he felt that in this case he should assume the entire financial responsibility, but we decided on a plan satisfying both of us.

We went to Creedmoor State Hospital together, spoke to the medical chief, and on his assurance, decided to go ahead and bring J. out by all means. Together we met the wife at A.S.'s office, asked her to make a list of items that she thought were needed to furnish a three- or four-room apartment, giving her an idea of the spending limit we had in mind. We further guaranteed a job for her husband, and until one was found, a weekly allowance in the approximate amount of any salary he could expect to earn at that time. This was in the summer of 1941, and while jobs were plentiful, there was in this case the handicap of a lapse of time in his employment that might have to be explained and might prove to be a deterring factor. A promise from her to help, taking full or part-time employment, completed the arrangements. The wife informed me two days after, that she had rented an apartment at $40 per month and that the process of furnishing had begun, well within

the limit of our indicated allowance.

In about ten days, J. returned to a home, better than any he had ever lived in. A.S. and I had a brotherly talk with J. He immediately found work, has held the position for over four years, with average weekly take-home wages of over $40. The daughter now holds a responsible position, earning a similar amount. She belongs to some young people's groups, also a junior lodge, and follows worthwhile cultural pursuits.

I humbly state this to be another case that could not receive better care and guidance at the hands of a large welfare organization. I am also pleased to think that a comparatively small sum was used, but great patience and a sincere wish to serve have brought peace of mind to a family, and have saved the state and our city many thousands of dollars.

I could relate many other unique experiences in a wide field of human spiritual upheaval. Social service in a big city is of necessity and for all practical purposes specialized. My work was that of the general practitioner and touched all phases of life, one incident leading to another. It was even non-sectarian, despite the fact that my social life was 99 per cent Jewish. As in the case of my father's father, some of my Christian friends felt that I could succeed where priest and minister had failed. In

one instance, the son of a Catholic friend, a young man of thirty, with wife and four children, had, under pressure and worry due to illness in his home, diverted money he had collected while he was in the employ of a large insurance company, writing industrial insurance. The friend came to me first for the solution and then sent the son to confession and absolution of sin to his priest. An adjustment was made with the bonding company. My friend and his daughter, inside of two years, reimbursed me for my outlay in the matter.

Here is another matter in which I, the Jew, was sought as advisor by a Catholic young man, at the beginning of an ensuing drama, and again by the Protestant girl, 25 years after, when she was his wife and the mother of two grown children.

My young friend had asked me to go with him to visit the girl and her family, to look them over and help him in his weighty decision. I tried my best to keep out of this delicate matter. I was not yet married and did not think that I was qualified to give more than general advice. Differences in religion, nationality, temperament and breeding, together with other disturbing symptoms, should have been enough to dissuade him from taking the step. I spoke frankly in the matter, but of no avail.

After their marriage, I continued to see the

husband now and then, but the wife very rarely. Twenty-five years after, when they had separated, she came to me to discuss divorce, the advice of her family. She named as co-respondent, a widow, enjoying a good reputation in the community, whose daughter was to be married in the next weeks. The wife was torn between a feeling for revenge on her rival, and that of compassion for the daughter, who would be the innocent victim of circumstances evolving from a scandal. After consulting with me, she decided to stay legal proceedings for the time being. My advice to her was: "Keep the door open."

Several years after, during her husband's last illness, there was a reconciliation. The husband died. At the conclusion of the funeral services, coming up the aisle in the chapel, the wife stopped at the pew in which I was standing, and uttered between sobs: "'Keep the door open.' .. thanks!"

It was long my fervent hope that I would be in a position to retire from business at a time when my physical strength would still permit me to devote myself to social service, exclusively. The 1930 decade delayed the realization of that dream.

I am glad to think that my work and business never suffered under the demands on my time by these extra activities. In fact I had enough leisure time to do the things

with my family and friends that are practiced by sane and normal people. I satisfied my appetite for music, theater, even reasonable gambling such as is done in respectable society. I played bridge at ten cents a hundred, pinochle at five cents a hundred, went to baseball games with my son and grandsons, but was never a "fan." I never saw a football game and only the one, unforgettable prize-fight. Horse races, I only attended in Paris, more in search of fashion clues than to satisfy any gambling instinct. I had time for duty and social calls. I was interested in politics but never active in them beyond the stage of debate and voting.

The day for retirement seemed far off. With the advent of World War II, business became very active and I relapsed to natural form in my application to the task, forgetting that I had lived three-score-plus years. In 1943 Nature gave warnings, but like most people, I refused to heed them. I thought two weeks in Maine and 12 days at Lakewood, would repair all. My error. On December 27, 1943, in the early morning, I suffered a severe coronary attack. This recurred several times through January. Rest in bed, medical and nursing care, brought me back to slow-motion life in May 1944. At the end of the summer, the family divulged the result of a months-old conspiracy, demoting me from the position of breadwinner. My official date of retirement is December 31, 1944.

CHAPTER XXXI: IN RETIREMENT

The step from a life as active as mine to one of extreme retirement is not a light one. I say "extreme retirement," quite different from that one dreams of and plans in days of good health -- the time one can lay down the reins and relay responsibility. It is regrettable that in the race of life, so much is put off to that day when --.

Very few people in the United States know how and when to bow out of the arena gracefully. A physical breakdown, or at least a deteriorating degree of efficiency, becomes the deciding factor in most instances. When we have the price and the health, we haven't the time, and when we have the time, one or both of the above-named essentials are missing.

I have met so many men who complain about the monotony and purposelessness of their retired state. Some claim that in their lack of diversion, they have developed all sorts of ailments. I am happy to say that in my period of transition, I never experienced these fears and disturbances. It all results from the individual viewpoint of life and old age. Life and Nature supply us with a multitude of things that are within the reach of even those of very modest means, but so many of us pass them unnoticed.

Some of my family and the doctor, were concerned about finding a hobby of some kind for me, and even thought of picture-puzzles and the like. I am sure that they are rejoicing with me in the fact that I have not a lonely moment, in fact, not enough time to follow, at necessarily reduced tempo, the many interests presented by a world trying to return to a steady keel. Then there is the enjoyment and stimulation brought to us by the miracles of modern inventions, especially the radio.

One of the regrets that I have is the postponement of certain reading for which I never found the necessary calm and leisure. The good memory exhibited in much of the detail related in preceding chapters, is now, alas, on the wane. I read, I am thrilled, but annoyed when after a short time, most of it is forgotten. I am grateful, however, to be possessed of a sense of discovery of much that is interesting and often gripping, that one passes by in the rush of business or professional life.

Another regret for a matter left undone, but not a very serious one, is that of keeping a diary. This was perhaps another blessing in disguise. After showing in this story what a heap of trifling details can pile up in one good memory, I dread to think of the blockade on the road of thought that might ensue from an accumulation of recorded experiences as preserved in a diary.

A diary has value as an exact record of oft disputed facts surrounding a usually not over-important occurrence. One of my friends, who in his diary makes record of the weather day by day, takes great pride in disproving such momentous statements as that of the regular heat wave that comes with the Day of Atonement. If I had kept a diary, I might not have had the urge to write these memoirs, -- and what a lot of fun I would have missed not having this very legitimate excuse for talking about myself to my heart's content!

While retired from the performance of active executive work, he who can march along in the step of ever-changing trend and custom, and in the light of a new viewpoint, can yet contribute his mite to that most powerful of abstract forces, namely public opinion. The world can still learn something from the well-seasoned, progressive, open mind of him that has survived the torrents of troubled waters of the past and is now watching the rolling stream of life from staid shores.

At all times let us remember how wrong were those gloomy prophets of every generation, predicting the doom of the reckless succeeding one. Let us old ones realize that we have lived our lives, and let us place confidence in our successors who will not do any worse than we did.

CHAPTER XXXII: FAITH ETERNAL, DESPITE MIGHT-HAVE-BEENS

The seconds, minutes, hours and days,
The week, the month, the year,
Make up Time's stream and waterways
That take their course arrear,

Into the Ocean of the Past
That holds the joys and tears
Of generations old and vast,
Their deeds, their hopes, their fears.

Each second, too, a molecule
Of endless time to come,
That flows through heaven's vestibule
To the Millenium.

Each kindly thought that we conceive
God's Spirit is, and Breath.
Each human act that we achieve
Defeats the lurking Death.

The Future, Present, and the Past
Are one in verity;
The Good we do will link us fast
Unto Posterity.

Without wishing to live in the past, reminiscences can be a very pleasant pastime. To relive happy hours or to review climactic successes won against odds after months or years of weary labor, through doubts and obstacles, is stimulating, even rejuvenating. The chronic pessimist or he who loves to be miserable and have company, can readily find enough "might have been" in his life to feed his own peculiar, morbid craving. It is sad to see so many of this type, who refuse to find joy and hope in the sunset, and

for whom there is no twilight or serenity.

I consider myself most fortunate to have through the years cultivated an optimism that sees a silver lining in even the darkest cloud. Every life has its sorrows. For every door that closes, a new one opens, and happy is he who has faith and trust in the good purpose of the Universe.

Inadequate are words and pen;
I wish somehow I could
In song or verse, now and again,
Proclaim that life is good.

I am grateful for a sustaining sense of humor that helps to mitigate the feeling of disgust and outrage we sometimes experience by the ever-present hypocrisies and complacencies. A sense of humor often proves to be the most effective antidote against a case of righteous indignation from which no one with an iota of understanding of justice can escape.

We so often hear the remark "If I had to live life over again..." Most people, under the same circumstances, would probably act in the same way. The fewest of us profit much by past experience. The fatalist contends that all is predestined; the astrologist believes in the planned life guided by the stars. As I review my past, I have few regrets and I accept responsibility for all my mistakes. I tried to follow the dictates of my own heart, but like every normal human, permitted myself to be influenced sometimes, to

follow the wrong trend.

While the slogan "Nothing risked, nothing gained," sounded reasonable to me, I was not a gambler. Nevertheless, I could not withstand the temptation in the pre-1929 days, also to make a little "easy money." The atmosphere then was saturated with a spirit of speculation, and like a contagion, the germ infected even the most conservative. Before those days, I invested surplus funds in Class A bonds only and preached against margin and instalment buying of any kind. The customers' men of three Stock Exchange brokerage houses, lunch table conversations, business friends, soon made you feel like a cowardly Schlemiel if you stayed out. When I think, however, of the fateful experiences of the super-conservatives who bought guaranteed mortgages, or the many cautious investors in real estate, I am convinced that only cash under the mattress or in the savings bank was secure. Many of that generation are still here, and in the past, have listened to the criticism of the new ones which could not understand how it could have been lured into the trap. But see them at this time, both the old and the new, repeating the same folly. The ingredients of that calamitous situation are again with us, and like drunkards with alcohol, so will they overindulge and come out of it with the same headache.

I have, in an earlier chapter, mentioned errors

of judgement in changing a position, and later on entering the business that least appealed to me. I never made a big financial success, but always paid one hundred cents on a dollar and built up a good reputation. If I had it to do over again, I would not enter a style business, subject to whim and weather, with dull and busy seasons, but rather a line that goes throughout the year by virtue of daily consumption, such as foods, or one dealing in staple materials like metals and other basic articles.

I would again come to these free United States, and live in New York. I have at times felt that a smaller city might have offered more with less strain, but when I weigh the advantages of this cosmopolitan center against the offerings of other places, I conclude that there is much here not to be found elsewhere to recompense us for the inconveniences of the crowded, hustling metropolis.

One thing that I would not do again, is to seek the over-amount of advice and follow it, even when it is against my own judgement and taste. It is important to hear the honest viewpoint of qualified advisers, but it is more important for us to know our own strength and ability. Sincere advisers are hard to find and they frequently underestimate the makeup of him who seeks their counsel. This applies especially to our close relatives who forget that their sons or younger brothers have grown up. Then there

are those who give slipshod advice, since it means nothing to them. Just as dangerous and unfair, is counsel from some "dear" uncle or relative, who is beforehand fearful of assuming responsibility or lay himself open to a possible future "touch." There are two proverbs; first, "Advice is cheap," and the second, "Guter Rat ist teuer" (Good advice is dear (rare). They sound paradoxical, yet both truly apply, as the case may be.

I have one great regret, that of underestimating the value of periodic vacations. Somehow, with a reduction of working hours, the vacation has been emphasized and increased. When the workday was from eight to six, Saturdays to five, vacations were short and spasmodic. The average employer fared even worse than his employees, and his day often started before eight and lasted after six.

I am very grateful for a disposition that did not permit me to begrudge another his success or good fortune. With one or two exceptions, I parted with business associates and employees on the best of terms. As time went on, some of them grew even closer to me, after they had experiences with the general run of the "go-getters" that want to get it first, and all.

CHAPTER XXXIII: LIFE'S GREATEST REWARD

Our social circle shrinks as we go along. Contemporaries, alas, one by one, go to their last reward, or our physical condition limits personal contact with them. The telephone, after all, is a great blessing and becomes, in a measure, a good substitute for personal visiting. Our most valuable assets in our old age are health and family. Great material possessions, the things that are looked upon by the world as the most coveted of chattels, mean nothing when the fires of the family hearth burn low or worse yet, have gone out.

I am rich as Croesus in the love and devoted cooperation of my soulmate who basks with me in the sunshine and warmth emanating from our children and grandchildren, each one by virtue of his love, character, and high aspiration, bespeaking the success of our own united life. We have marched hand in hand for almost half a century through joy and sorrow, sickness and health.

What can a man of sixty-eight
Say to his lovely wife,
In fitting terms to dedicate
To years of happy life...

No mortal is so smooth of tongue,
The story to relate;
No singer's song was ever sung
To grace such blissful state.

As sunshine lights and heals and warms,
Dispersing gloom and fear,
So do your presence and your charms
Bring comfort, hope and cheer.

In days when Fate would strike its rod,
As is all mankind's due,
Resigned to the Will of God,
You said: "March on and do!"

No one has better understood
Led by true instinct's guide,
The Noble, Sacrificial, Good,
To spread them far and wide.

Another milestone on the way,
With pointing arrowhead,
Not marking space, but just to say:
"Go forth, good road ahead."

And may the road be long and straight
And free from pain and ill,
As we, together, all the Eight
March on, with God's Good Will.

This was written on September 29, 1942; at this writing, we are Nine.

Only one in millions among daughters has the capacity for the love, loyalty and devotion that is brought us by our own. In her three sons, most promising as future champions of justice and democracy, defenders of Jewish rights and proponents of world freedom, I see the crowning success of my life.

Unlike the usual run of sires, I was never overconcerned about the bequest of material things that I might make to my children or their children. The mistaken idea to prepare a path of life for our offspring, that is free of the ruts and hazards of that which was our own, has wrought harm and ruin in many cases. There seems to be little correction of this delusion and the sad heartbreaks caused by

the conduct of pampered sons and daughters continue.

I was never obsessed with the wish to have a son that would follow in my exact footsteps, but was always conscious of the effect of example. Without belittling the importance of material possessions, I believe we brought the spiritual values to the focus in the picture of life's success. I have in many ways referred to incidents that bespeak the satisfying results of this practice in the careers of our daughter and our son.

The crowning reward for my efforts in the bringing up of our son, Edmond, Jr., came to me in the form of a bound volume, containing the letters I wrote him from the time he entered Cornell in 1929, through 1934, when he was in his Freshman year at medical school. Another precious keepsake is the following sonnet written to me on my sixtieth birthday. I say, without fear of betraying immodesty, "It is a wise child who knows his own father."

Dear man, beloved father, this is not
A day of dedication, but a day
Of joy in recollection, full of hope
Which you must take from all good things not passed
And not forgotten; this is the day which you
Await or dread, or else rejoice within.

There was a boy, scarce seventeen, who turned
His back upon a scene too dear to leave
Too stagnant for his life or his desire.
A Jew of French descent, too mild, too fine
To crush himself beneath the Juggernaut
Of hates, not his, or spirit not his own.
Before his eyes, this lad could see a life
More full than any life at keeping store
For peasants, caught between the stones which ground
The bloody destiny of Europe's West.

Unto the gleaming city, came this lad
To conquer, suffer, cast his lot among
Strange folk, a thousand leagues, a century
From home.
Oh, tell me, Memory divine,
Is time too long, is daily life too full
That we do know so little of the lives
Of those we dearly love?

God's eye can see
A little girl of eight, all curious
As children are, upon the iron step
Of that old stair-escape, meant more for safe
Delivery from holocaust, than for
Too critical a view of strange but hand-
Some men from far off lands.
It sees a boor
Enjoy the joke of making "Dutchy" shine
The sign before his firm's head office, or
A justice-loving lad berate a fool,
In English grand, because he beat his horse
Much more than it could stand;
Or else the boy
Who kept the keys, ran errands, carried beer
And gained but three green bills for weekly pay;
A man who slaved, while turning from a dream
Unto another vision, worked to see
A home, a wife, some wishes, some defeat.

God sees a worker selling caps to keep
A baby's ears from growing teddy-bear,
Or lady's hats, or tinsels, beads and silks,
Now chained to strive for wealth, because it meant
Repose, a home, the rearing of a child;
Who saw the basis of success pass out
Of hand, and thought himself a failure, though
He knew from whence he came, and what his life
Had been.

* * *

Somewhere beyond a world of cash
And bonds and stocks and bills and checks and stubs
A heaven is, wherein the gold is love,
And where the silver coins are goodness and
The assets service; righteousness is cash.
A Clerk records the act of playing "son"
To an old man, whose sons are gone away,
Who waits for death, sans immortality,
Sans hope. The younger fellow stays and chats
And comforts, aids and eases all the pains
That lonely death can bring to one whose hope
Has died before his time.

God sees a man
Following a prophet, doing good as best
He can, but holding tight, a great clean faith
Against all sneers, with pride and decency.
He sees him pass his faith unto his kin,
Teaching his children, its demands, its power,
Its lore, ideals, its hopes and holy rites.
God sees this man give more than is required
To aid the folk less fortunate than he.
He sees a happy mortal in the midst
Of his one daughter's brood, at home with wife
And son. He sees him give inspiration
That makes one clench one's fists, tears fill one's eyes,
As we do swear, "We can, we will, we must."

* * *

The man now sees his fortune weaken, sees
His body show the signs of age and wear;
He sees his son, just waver on the road
And wonders, "Will he stand the gaff of life?"
He turns and tells himself that, all in all,
Success was never his, nor E'er can be.

The old Clerk, kind, before his golden book,
Now smiles at this most earthly bitterness;
His figures show a better book account --
His data points the other way. He finds
The firm has kept the faith and played the game;
Has helped its fellows, never losing sight
Of justice, service, honesty and right;
Has reared its children, trained to carry on
The business fair of living righteously,
Of praising God, of walking on with Man.
He strikes a balance trial, and he is pleased.

Oh, Father, join the celebration fine
Of years, some long, some short, some bad, some good,
Of years through which you ever stood
For what you thought was right or deemed divine.
If you would see what real success was thine,
But greet these friends, recall these works which would
Well show thy virtues greatly understood.
In virtue, mortals follow God's design.
For sixty years of life, come, praise the Lord
For home, for Mother, children, praise thou He!
For yours is Light, and naught is lost or gone.

This is the time that Fates few men afford,
Achieving life and immortality
Our love is deep and we shall carry on!

April 23, 1934

We were very happy in his choice of a profession and lived with him through the thrills and decisions that accompany the preparations, graduations, Interneships and Residencies connected with his vocation and its extensive training. During those days, I tried to imagine the thrill I would feel seeing my son riding along on an ambulance, giving first-aid to a poor victim. My dream was never realized because he interned in a Chicago hospital. I still feel the pride that was mine on hearing that he was allowed to perform his first appendectomy, and that he assisted at brain operations, etc., etc.

The news of his election to Alpha Omega Alpha first only impressed us because it rated a long distance call from Chicago. When we were told by a friend, a professor at Bellevue Medical School, that he, too, had just been elected to this honor in recognition of his publication of several medical books, we felt the full meaning of this distinction. When he was drafted to internship at his own training hospital, when his Dean, at graduation, and again several of his teachers, wrote letters, naming him as one of the first graduates of their school, we felt that we were richly rewarded for our investment of money, thought and guiding care.

We know that he is happy in his chosen field and is looking forward to serving humanity after his release

from army service. He may never become a wealthy doctor but he will serve mankind in a most conscientious way. Together with his lovely young wife, he will found a home, and, let us hope, a family, that together with that of his sister, will be the height of attainment and the glory of success to the little girl that came over the fire-escape and the "greenhorn" of 1891.

FROM THERE TO HERE AND EVER NEAR

Thus I have wandered from the foothills of the Vosges Mountains to the sacred soil of our beloved America, sheltered by the good Spirits of an immortal ancestry, and ever under the protecting care and guidance of the One and Divine Father. I am approaching the heights from where I hope to see the Promised Land. May I be judged and not found wanting in the balance, and be permitted to enter it, there to join the Infinite Spirit that is life supreme and unending.

Yet Love will dream, and Faith will trust,
(Since He who knows our need is just)
That somehow, somewhere, meet we must.
Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress trees!
Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across the mournful marbles play!
Who hath not learned, in hours of faith,
The truth to flesh and sense unknown --
That Life is ever lord of Death,
And Love can never lose its own.
-- John Greenleaf Whittier

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Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me,
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of time and place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.
-- Tennyson